



Seduced star Ric Sarabia: "Whatsa matter, Jolly Green Giant? Air too thin up there? Hey—just kidding!!!"

## Entertainment

"Indeed, indeed, my socks are thinking."  
-James Tate-

# Weird, but valiant

### Andrew C. Rowsome

Being back at York caused me apprehension to begin with, staying up so late at night so early in the year (i.e. the first day of classes) felt foolhardy.

Venturing through the cold concrete maze after nightfall did nothing to improve my state of mind. Terrors of isolation after the intermittent after-hours bus service ceased, chilled the air. I am willing to swear that the wind was chuckling as it bounced off the Ross building's granite grin. Like a proverbial beacon the Stong-Bethune complex beamed across the desolate parking lot. "To-nite *SEDUCED*"

Inside was better. Residence's approximation of life swirled around and at least it was cheerful. The interior of the Samuel Beckett Theatre was a dramatic change. Cozy and intimate, filled with a cross-section of the York community. Centre-stage offered a comfortable-looking, over-stuffed easy chair, quite sensibly (in this day of sticky snacks and social diseases) it was covered with plastic.

As the lights dimmed a husky male voice two seats over warned his date: "I don't know this one but it's Sam Shepard so it's bound to be weird."

It's better that audiences be attracted by 'weirdness' than not at all. For *Seduced* was a valiant attempt by a talented group. I hope the date wasn't too disappointed because Shepard's work could be enjoyed on a very accessible level. When a steamy number in corsets, a large dose of humour and a very strong performance by Ric Sarabia are added to a metaphorical dissection of the Howard Hughes myth, the worst the results could be is intriguing.

Strangely this was part of the problem. The audience was having such a good time (evidenced by gales of uproarious laughter) that the cast had problems concentrating. There were several points where they appeared ready to be convulsed with stifled guffaws. In a very real sense this served to draw the audience into the play; building a rapport with the cast. In another sense it erased the tension of the finely tuned dialogue, disrupting the tempo.

Jennifer Hayglass elicited the most laughs with her bitchily arched eyebrows and an unabashedly hilarious interpretation of another character's adventures in Las Vegas.

A lampoon of the Central Squarites virtually guaranteed a warm welcome for Rose Cutrara's characterization of 'Miami'. As soon as it became obvious that the audience was very supportive, Walter Villa relaxed into his role and was quite pleasant to watch.

At the centre of the production Ric Sarabia turned in a consistently powerful performance. Considering that he co-directed (with Jennifer Hayglass) that is no mean achievement; he was intense yet avoided indulging in excess.

Although *Seduced* is easily read as faintly autobiographical, it could also be applied to the York situation as an essay on the dangers of isolationism and the refusal to contact reality. The program contains a plea for "actors, directors, writers, dancers, techies, etc." to contribute to the theatre's upcoming season. Judging by their first production (occurring before school was even completely in session) the Samuel Beckett Theatre may be very good star to hitch your wagon to.

## The bop shop

### Howard Goldstein and Steven Hacker

Neighbours, an Austrian contemporary jazz trio are scheduled to make their first Canadian appearance at The Edge this Sunday. The trio, consisting of Dieter Glawischnig on piano, Ewald Oberleitner on bass, and drummer John Preininger, is highly regarded in European jazz circles and has played with some of the new music's most notable personalities such as Anthony Braxton and Roscoe Mitchell. Their music covers the vast spectrum of improvisation from swing to freestyle and is characterized by the musicians' energetic and emotional playing. Together the members of Neighbours form a tight collective unit that does not sacrifice individuality. A band well worth checking out.



Good Neighbours play good jazz at the Edge this Sunday.

After months and months of delay, the new albums from the innovative and diverse Artists House label have arrived in Toronto. Among the new releases is *Tales of Captain Black*, a unique fusion of punk and jazz by hot New York guitarist James Blood Ulmer and featuring pioneer saxophonist Ornette Coleman. Other releases include *Pendulum*, an exciting live recording of the Dave Liebman quintet, and *From California with Love*, a long-awaited Andrew Hill solo piano date.

Stephane Grappelli will be making his annual autumn appearance at Massey Hall on October 23. Versatile guitarist Larry Coryell will open the show as well as accompany Grappelli. At age 72 Stephane Grappelli still swings like no one else can and judging from his past performances in Toronto, this is one concert not to be missed.

## This ain't no bubble bath

### Salem Alaton

The present rash of juvenility in major North American film production has made an oasis of all adult-minded entertainment reach the screen. With spectacles represented by pulp science fiction (*Close Encounters*, *Star Wars*), drama by gimmicky television thinking (*Brubaker*, *The Hunter*) and comedy by sheer puerility (*Animal House*, *1941*), audiences are unexpectedly responsive to contemporary movies which at least dissemble an adult level. Witness the barn-burning success of last year's *Kramer vs. Kramer*, a sincere film, yet one which should have twenty peers in any year of Hollywood output.

Warm responses are likely for *Middle Age Crazy*, a comedy-drama that purrs along without important statements or custard pies. Screenwriter Carl Kleinschmitt's humour makes itself felt without undue rib-nudging and director John Trent (formerly of the C.B.C.) finds nice cinematic touches unannounced by loud stylishness. The story of a successful 40-year-old architect's brief tryst with freedom from his obligations to wife and family, *Middle Age Crazy* has a good-natured unobtrusiveness that lets one empathize readily with its characters, share its humour. Well-drawn secondary characters, that vital quality so often absent of late, go a long way towards giving the film its easy verisimilitude (Canadian actor Eric Christmas gives an excellent portrayal of the protagonist's father).

Bruce Dern has been the project's centre of attention, and though the transition from his series of terse, aggressive screen roles to an appealing romantic lead is being somewhat



Deborah Wakeham and Bruce Dern. O.K., America, show us your knuckles!

overstated, *Middle Age Crazy* definitely offers him new scope. He has a vulnerability here, which, amidst the carefully delivered laughs, somehow conspires to be poignant, affecting. In a sense, one wants to enjoy the romance of Dern on the threshold of a second career; it is true that he has never realized his potential, not least in recognition.

The film's tidy circle of conflict-action-reconciliation may strike some as being too pat, but again, *Middle Age Crazy* doesn't burden itself with pretensions to wider implica-

tions (a weight which *Kramer vs. Kramer* could not escape, and for which it suffered the protests of people who insisted on seeing large male-female equations in it and found its solutions facile). Despite the film's cool manoeuvring and rather glossed-out surface, it works as a surprisingly personal episode—here again, Dern's intimacy is the key.

If there is such a product as the MOR (middle-of-road) film, *Middle Age Crazy* is probably a good example of it; a commercial entertainment that doesn't insult, and communicates something of human values despite its slick encapsulation.

## Goodbye, Bill 1929-1980

Bill Evans died today, the day I sold my stereo. I won't be playing his records any more. And Basin Street can't guarantee gigs anymore due to the complicated lives of jazz musicians.

Ron Mann



Collis H. Davis