

Kudelka Shows Versatility

by John Timmins

In a vertiginous swirl of personalities and incidents, Jan Kudelka's one-woman show "Circus Gothic" essentialises her six-month stint with "an old-time, tented circus" which toured New Brunswick in 1974, a heady, high-pressure core from which Kudelka has mined some ground breaking theatre. With the possible exception of Quentin Crisp's biographical performance, I know of no other one person show that has been this personal, this soul-bearing, this iconoclastic.

Beginning with the conflict between the sophisticated European school of clowning which was her training, and the vulgar American slapstick clowning she resulted in performing, Kudelka's pressurized narrative soon expounds the numerous other more severe, humiliating problems that an actual circus tour involves, problems serious enough to threaten survival. From the broken down truck that sabotages the circus big top, leaving both performers and audience defenseless before a hurricane, to the slipshod generator that electrocutes two of the roustabouts, the narrative never lets us forget the constant threat of calamity at the

next stop. Yet even so, the seediness and danger of this world of one night stands in no way clouds our impression of its heady, thrilling multifariousness. More than a dozen characters are paraded before us in Kudelka's chameleon performance, running the gamut from smooth, con-artist managers to over-the-hill trampoline ladies to members of the narrow-minded, unyielding rural audience, each uniquely individualized. Then, almost as reinforcement of her versatility, apparently bored with people, she transforms herself into first Elly, the degraded yet still imperial elephant, then Lump a deformed malicious cat. The speed and efficiency of these metamorphosis are breathtaking in the root sense - we have to run to keep up with her.

In a highly personal show of this kind, separating performer and text is difficult, but once done, an important distinction emerges. After TNB's "Man of La Mancha", Kudelka's performing acumen is no surprise but one is not prepared for her literary ability. "Circus Gothic" is essentially one long poem, interrupted at times by the most daring bursts of imagery, as the poet/actress recreates playing children accidentally unearthing a corpse on the circus grounds, a drug-ridden tightrope walker's

fragmentation under pressure, the boogy venom of an unemployed, frustrated miner sparking a riot in Minto, or an exhausted elephant's dreams of Ceylon. In this gift for arresting innovative language is one of "Circus Gothic"'s main strengths as well as its main weakness for, while Kudelka's imagery renders

her experience with a startling clarity, it also accents the show's episodic nature, even further isolating individual incidents and making the dim narrative connections even more tenuous. Similarly, continually but not completely absorbing and assimilating new material, weakens its structure.

Given a stronger, more solid narrative framework and firmer connections between passages, and Jan Kudelka's shrewd insights (about life, people AND the circus), her ability to clinch an incident in one or two perfectly honed phrases and her remarkable versatility will have all the support they richly deserve.



KEVIN BACKS Photo

The girls of the kickline warm up for the 33rd Red 'n Black Revue.

Folk Collective

By ANDY BARTLETT

The Folk Collective holds its next Coffeehouse on November 17, a Saturday night. This coffeehouse will feature singers and musicians from across Canada who will be in Fredericton that weekend attending the Annual Conference of the Canadian Folk Music Society. The Collective has made a request beofre for people to provide a place for some of these visitors to sleep for Friday night, the 16th, and Saturday the 17th. Some interest has been shown but the request is renewed. The number to call is Andy Bartlett (455-6120).

The Thursday night Song Circle continues in the Woodshed, top floor of the SUB, around 9:00. All the closet musicians in town are cordially invited. During the regular run of the Woodshed coffeehouse this past week Chris Rawlings played. Rawlings is a long-time folksinger from Montreal and his show was excellent. The songs covered a wide range. For example, some titles were "Frozen Teardrops", "Ici On Parle Anglais" and "Henry Hudson". The songs treated their subjects with humor, wisdom, and downright excellent tunes. Coming up for the nights of November 11-14 is Tracey Riley. Be sure not to miss her show.

Finally, the Collective has a need for people who are interested in baking and gathering munchies for the next coffeehouse. If you prepare some good food for the goodies table (cookies, bread, bread and cheese, squares...) you are returned all the money you spent on materials and gratefully thanked. Its a fine way to spend an evening and meet a lot of hungry people. If anyone is interested, please call Martha Vowles at 455-1752 or 453-4849.

For any information on the Collective, feel free to contact Andrew Bartlett at 455-6120.

Creative Arts Presents Fialkowska

November 20th, 8:30 p.m. at the Playhouse Janina Fialkowska, piano "...a magnificent talent." Le Figaro THE WALTER BAKER MEMORIAL CONCERT

Pianist Janina Fialkowska was born in Montreal, Canada in 1951. She began piano studies with her mother at the age of five, and later entered the Ecole de Musique Vincent d'Indy in Montreal, where she studied with Mlle. Yvonne Hubert. In 1968 she earned (at the incredible age of 17) her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the University of Montreal. In 1969, after taking First Prize in the Radio Canada National Talent Festival (the first of many national and international prizes), she traveled to Paris where she studied with the renowned Yvonne Lefebvre. Returning from France the following year, she entered the Juilliard School of Music in New York and since then has studied with the celebrated piano pedagogue Sascha Gorodnitzki.

Fialkowska is now a frequent guest soloist with the major orchestras on three continents. She has played engagements and re-engagements with such first-rank American ensembles as the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony, the symphonies of Detroit, Seattle, among many others, with all the important orchestras of her native Canada, and the National Symphonic Orchestra of Mexico. She has been soloist with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of

Amsterdam, the Israel Philharmonic, the French National Radio Orchestra, the Bonn Philharmonic, the Warsaw Philharmonic and the Scottish National Orchestra. In England she has appeared as soloist with the London Philharmonic, the New Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the BBC Northern Symphony and the London Mozart Players. She has performed as soloist at Kennedy Center in Washington with both the National Symphony and the Quebec Symphony.

Miss Fialkowska's recital performances have taken her to leading cities of this continent, including New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Houston, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Portland, Montreal and Toronto. She recently completed an extensive recital tour of Spain, and has captivated audiences with her recitals in other European cities including Paris, Venice and Lisbon. Conductors with whom Fialkowska has worked range from the younger Americans Leonard Slatkin, James Conlon and James De Priest, to the celebrated Mehta, Maazel, Kondrashin and Haitink.

Besides winning a host of admirers for her concerts, Janina Fialkowska has created a furor with her recordings. She is an exclusive RCA artist, and has so far recorded two albums: the first containing works of Liszt and the second an all-Chopin program. Never has a young pianist's first disc been so highly praised and rated equal to performances of

the most famous and established artists. The respected British journal "Music and Musicians" ended its review of the first record as follows in its January 1978 issue:

"Her performance of the Liszt Sonata...is surely one of the most masterful, lucid and musical readings on record. Even the most seasoned and celebrated pianist would be proud to offer a performance of such sustained mastery and musical insight."

Another British reviewer added: "Janina Fialkowska can be expected to rank with the world's great, contemporary or otherwise." David Hall, writing in *Stereo Review*, marveled at her "unerring sense of proportion, a feeling for the larger drama...and yet she slights no detail of ornamentation and passagework. Everything falls into place musically and dramatically from beginning to end of this performance... To hear Liszt with the poetry as well as the glitter is a fairly uncommon experience. Here is one disc that truly fills the bill." As for her all-Chopin record, the *London Cosmopolitan*'s review declared: "It's the best piano record of the year, hurrah!"

Radio network, and on national TV and radio in France and Holland. Critics have been virtually unanimous in their acclaim for her recital and concert work. Their attitude might be best summed up in the headline of the review of her recital in Austin, Texas: "FUTURE OF CLASSICAL PIANO MIGHT LIE WITH FIALKOWSKA"

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