

arts

Shot in the ass kicks off cute play

by Lindsay Brown

Goodbye Charlie, Stage West's current production, is a funny play.

And the acting in the George Axelrod play was commendable. And the sets were excellent. (You're waiting for the *but...* right? Well here it is.)

Butt... as usual, one left the Stage West production with a sense of dissatisfaction that dominated all other reactions.

The play is based on an interesting idea. Charlie Sorel, an obnoxious male chauvinist, is shot from behind as he crawls out of a yacht porthole. The gun was wielded by a jealous husband who happened to be Charlie's best friend. The lady involved was the best friend's wife.

Charlie's old buddy George (John Bayliss) holds a small memorial service for the dead lover. After the service, a gorgeous blonde lady walks in,

dressed in a raincoat only. The lady insists that she is Charlie, reincarnated.

Fun and games follow. There are a number of good one-liners and Bayliss delivers them with flawless timing. Charlie (Sally Ann Howes) is a hilarious, believable character, because Howes makes him that way.

The secondary roles were not strong performances, except for Terry Guntvordahl's agreeably priggish portrayal of a fair-weather friend of Charlie's.

But the gushy social butterfly Franny Saltzman (Pamela Boyd) was a little too gushy, and the beautiful Rusty Mayerling (the unfaithful wife, played by Nicole Morin) was a bit unconvincing. Her French accent was inconsistent, and she seemed awkward onstage.

It was all just a bit too cute. It is a wearisome thing when an audience always knows what's going to happen next. And it's a bad sign when the audience is

able to mouth the lines silently at the same time as the actors - it means there are may cliches. And it means we've all heard all the lines before - usually on television sitcoms, in this case.

Most of the male-female inter-reactions in the play are insultingly cutesy and innuendo-ish. In fact, at times, it seemed as though the actors would almost shout the *double-entendres*, as if they had no faith in our ability to understand hackneyed sexual jokes.

But there were some good moments when the reincarnated Charlie finds out what one of the (many) women he used so carelessly really thought of him. For a while the dialogue was less smart-assy.

In this case it is more accurate to criticize the play than the performance. Sally Ann Howes gave a bright performance and John Bayliss was a truly likable character, thanks to his skillful portrayal.

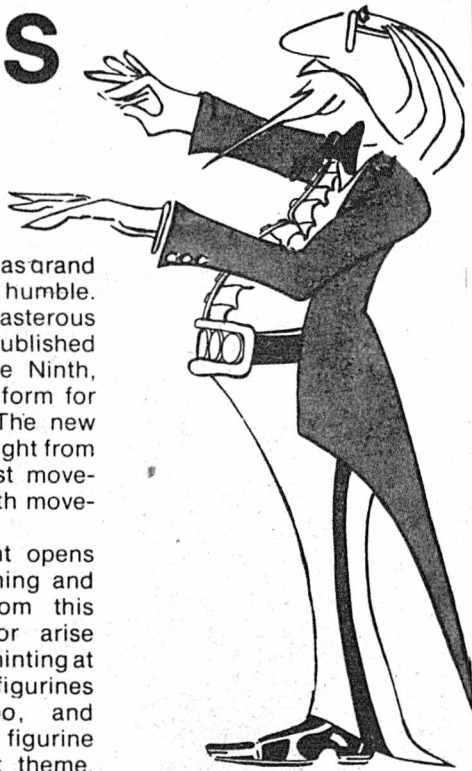
Goodbye Charlie runs at Stage West until November 21.



John Bayliss and Sally Ann Howes on the set of *Goodbye Charlie*

CLASSIC NOTES

by James Leslie



Beethoven's finale is as grand as his beginning was humble. After a space of 11 disastrous years, this composer published his last symphony, The Ninth, which heralded a new form for the static symphony. The new symphony was unique right from its much acclaimed first movement to the choral fourth movement.

The first movement opens with a mysterious droning and mulling of horns. From this continuum in D minor arise figurines of woodwinds hinting at the first theme. The figurines grow in length, tempo, and orchestration. The final figurine blossoms into the first theme, carried by piccolo and flute. After a short development, the principal theme digresses into the underlying mysterious mull of horns and woodwinds.

The second theme surfaces from the confusing drone in much the same manner as the first theme. The second theme is dominated by strings, which yield temporarily to flute and piccolo only to return more forcefully than before. After extensive development, the second theme also digresses into the mull of horns.

The coda is introduced in an awe inspiring related minor key with full orchestration. Figures of the first theme appear in long awaited D major. After somewhat latent development, they are repeated, only to digress once again into the indeterminate woodwind mull. The finale emerges from the depths of the woodwinds in grandeur befitting its terminal punctuation.

In the first movement, Beethoven set the form that is still with us today. The mastery of the horn and woodwind role continues to the score itself. The key

of D minor is an academic assignment only, as the third is carefully avoided and C has no incidental, leaving the actual key shrouded in doubt.

The lack of a formal introduction was a hitherto unexplored possibility, as figurines had previously been reserved for the coda.

The noticeable absence of a transitional cadence between themes exemplifies the departure from Mozartian first movements, in place of the traditional progression stands the continuum of the horn drone, and intrinsic drum roles.

In his last symphony, Beethoven gave an inspiring gift to both contemporary and future composers. The new patterns and forms gave rise to the measured exploration of tonality which followed Beethoven's era. Many of the new tonal forms arising from this work are still with us today.

For many people, the transition ended too soon, leaving much forever unexplored.

Kain, more than able...

Who needs women?

by Rudolph N.

Tuesday last the Ballets de Marseille displayed a program at the Jubilee Auditorium varied enough to interest and satisfy any enthusiast of dance; classical, modern and everything in between.

And to tickle national pride, Canada's Karen Kain danced the role of Carmen in the program's featured ballet. Ms. Kain dances most of the leading roles of the National Ballet of Canada; she is currently touring as guest artist with the Ballet de Marseille.

The spectrum of style covered in Tuesday's program well attests to the creative range of the company's founder and artistic director-choreographer, Roland Petit.

M. Petit was principal dancer with the Paris Opera at age

nineteen. Today at fifty-two he directs and occasionally participates in the Ballets de Marseille as it makes its first tour of Canada.

Pink Floyd began the evening, a ballet choreographed to the music of the innovative British rock band. One wondered if the dance was intended to amuse, intrigue, shock or merely limber up the company. At its best it did all of these, but at times it became slightly regimental and childish beyond the abandon expected of experimental dance.

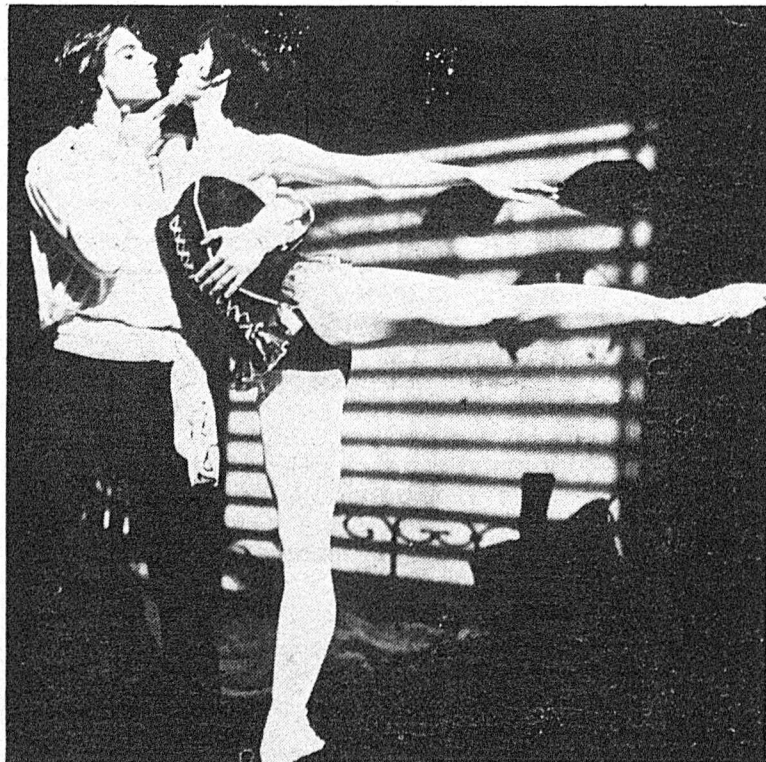
The second piece, *Pas de Deux* from *Les Intermittences Du Coeur* reflected a preference from Petit to emphasize the male dancers; in this dance Christopher Aponte and Jean-Marc Torres. Indeed a flippant reaction to this emphasis might be: who needs women? But the

vision and execution of the dance were above juvenile giggling. Petit seems to have been influenced by the Japanese Kabuki in creating the choreography. The result was dance somehow sexual but not generic. Aponte and Torres gave a universality to the erotic element and a tireless sensitivity to their movement.

In *L'Aresienne* the tender to regiment the corps again showed through, but perhaps explicitly so - the ballet tells of a man who is bewitched by a spectral woman and leaves her betrothed to pursue the vision. The erratic dance of the deluded man through ranks of townspeople aptly suggested insanity. The use of a backdrop imitating the tortured swirling of a Van Gogh painting deepened the impression of tension and a slipping reality.

Karen Kain's interpretation of Carmen made a notable impression even after an evening that ran the gamut in dance. Though faltering slightly on occasion, Ms. Kain was so delicate and exuberant when required and strong throughout an exhausting performance. With less care she might appear angular, but a practised grace instead makes tendrils of her long arms, the hands following her motion freely but always control.

Carmen was embellished with detail which incisively phrased the conflict and the Spanish setting of the piece. Carmen's overstated death was one detail which was not welcome, but the others were splendid - the swaggering promiscuous women, men who dry their hands on the drapes and best of all, a shower of hair into the ring after Don Jose finally kills Carmen - a crushing comparison between bull-killing and women-killing. In the mad cauldron that was and is Spain are the two distinguishable?



Karen Kain and Denys Ganio in *Carmen*