

# ARTS

## Limeys strike

Monty Python Flies Again, or A Collection of British Rubbish till Sept. 12  
Phoenix Theatre

Review by Bruce Longbottom

The reborn Theatre 3, in elegant downtown Edmonton, is presenting a three-man show until September 12. It's a collection of skits and songs by Noel Coward, Peter Cooke, and Dudley Moore, Flanders and Awan and some of the authors of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Some of the skits are simply superb: among these is the famous "I Want to Have an Argument", done by Ian Clark and John Peters. Another, "Secret Service", made notorious by the indescribable John Cleese, was also well executed. Two fine new sketches were written and performed by Warren Greaves.

In one, a retired brigadier wonders why Monty's Master Plan failed, and in another a pleasant old gentleman tries to buy a Five Pound Funeral. ("I thought you came to collect these things... Yes, I know the 36 goes right past the door. I can't sit up with a coffin on my knee, you know... You don't supply a coffin?") And again, "My name is Pardwits. P as in poison, A as in arsenic, R for rigor mortis, DWITS as in Death Where is Thy Sting?"

Clearly, Warren Graves is one of Edmonton's most accomplished actors; his movement and timing were a major attraction of the show. Of the other two, John Peters showed more talent, although the monologue he did in drag was embarrassingly awful, tasteless, and painfully long. This was the only wrong note in an otherwise smooth evening.

With a sketch on the birth of Christ, a couple of pieces on Ireland, and, of course, a glancing blow at newlyweds Chuck and Di, this show has something to offend everyone. I was particularly outraged by the skit on the Wagga Wagga School of Philosophy ("Socrates himself was permanently pissed...") This lot had better watch out, or I'll come around and rip their bloody arms off.

Come and get it



A critic's guide is available from the Arts desk, free to any past, present, or future contributor to the Arts page.

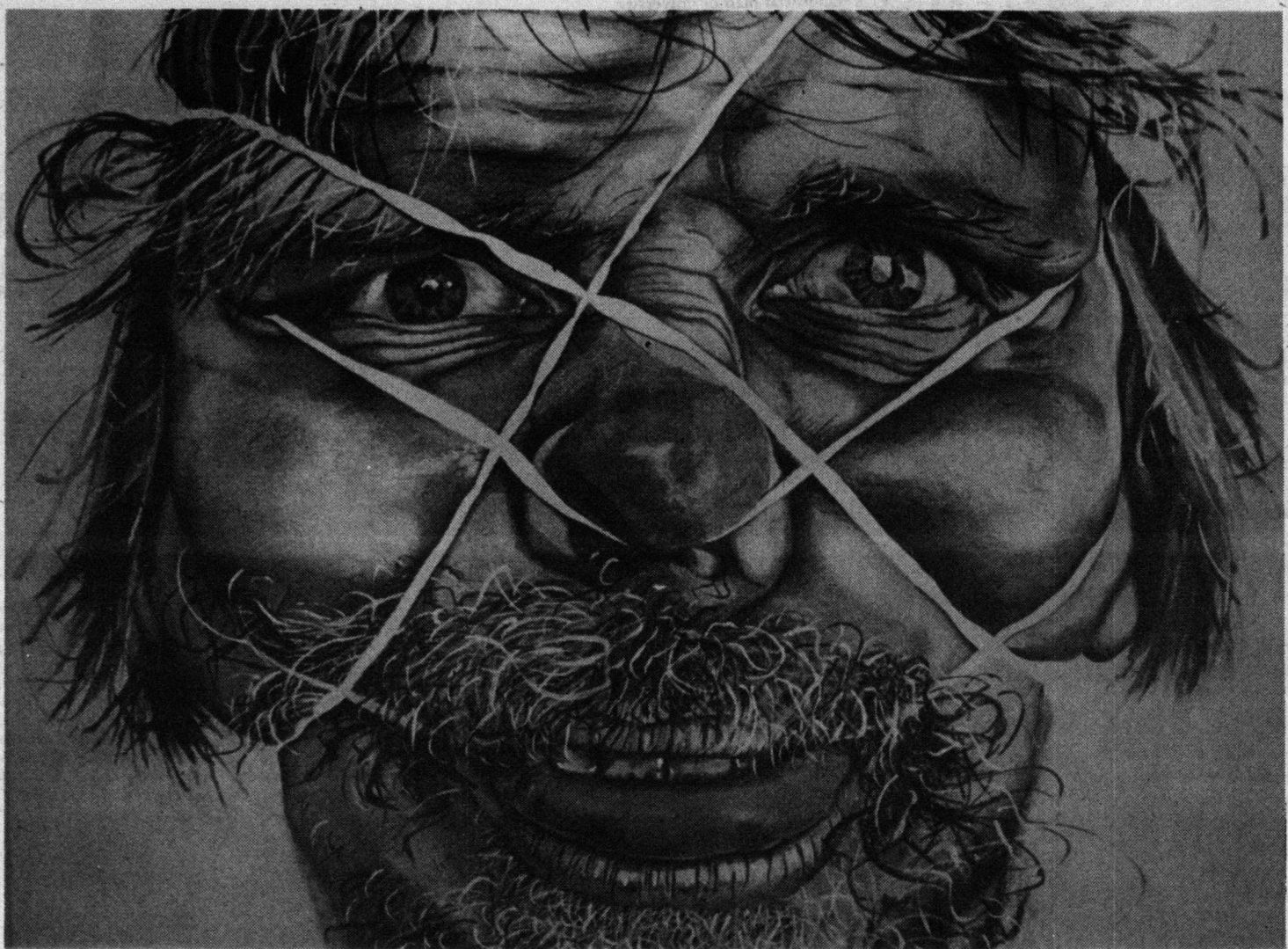


photo by Ray Giguere

This is "Changing My Plane" by Gary Olson, 1980, from the "Body Parts" exhibit showing at the SUB Art Gallery till September 22. Olson's graphite-on-paper portraits stress three-dimensional illusions playfully embellished with gum, ribbons, and banana peels. His gallery-mate Jim Westergard's pieces also depict faces, but his are covered

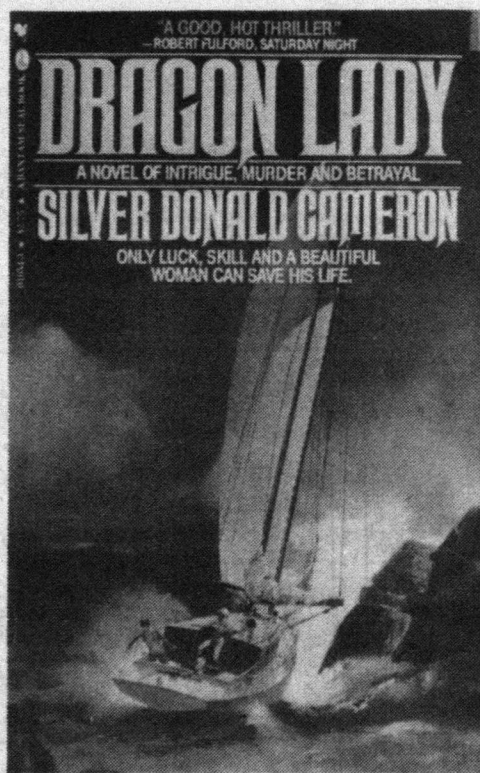
with paper, newsprint, and tinfoil so that only the eyes, nose, or mouth are showing. In one nipples replace the eyes. Both show a high degree of technical skill as do Darci Schuler-Mallon's and Ernest Lindler's; personal favorites. Any one of these four displays alone make the exhibit worth seeing.

Dennis Burton's five crotch shots, however,

are rather prosaic, and I would only recommend them to those with a special interest in female genitalia. Joice Hall's triptych "Male Pinup" is likewise competent but ordinary, and the only pleasure I derived from it was watching a mother drag her small son past it at 60 mph so he wouldn't be corrupted by the torpedo-sized penis in the center drawing.

J.A.

## Thriller has Maritime flavor



Dragon Lady  
Silver Donald Cameron  
1980 (Bantam 1981)

review by Jens Andersen

This novel centers on one of those burning political issues of our time which routinely cause editorial writers to foam at the mouth and pontificate about "our moral obligations as a civilized nation, etc." (all to no avail, judging by the persistence of the burning issue).

Silver Donald Cameron probably won't solve the problem either, but at least he wastes no time in fulminating about it or stuffing familiar sermons in the mouths of the people in his story. Rather, he simply writes a thriller about the disappearance of a freelance frogman, and the attempt made by his brother and friends to find him,

which leads them to uncover a shady, government concealed operation to ... but I am giving the story away.

Suffice it to say that the book is a billion times as engaging as any editorial, not only because of its low rhetoric content, but also its careful attention to making characters and incidents plausible.

(Which, after all is the real business of fiction. Anyone, even Tom Robbins, can write a book full of bizarre incidents and odd people never before seen on the face of the earth.)

For instance, as may be expected there are plenty of violent and action-packed episodes in *Dragon Lady*, but they are an organic part of the story and are not milked for their sensational aspects.

Again there is the only sex scene—a natural and graceful culmination of an honest-to-God relationship complete with tentative beginnings, awkward moments, flashes of humor, idyllic interludes, doubt, hesitation, conversational probing and sparring, and other preliminaries characteristic of any *homo sapiens* mating ritual.

Compare this to, say the cheap, gratuitous and unconvincing lady-meets-drunken-sailor, instant-heartfelt-love-and-cunnilingus episode in Robert Wall's *The Canadians Vol. 1 (Blackrobe)*.

The most seductive portions of the book, though, are those describing Nova Scotia (where Cameron lives and the story takes place), its people, and that transcendental Nova Scotian pastime, sailing. The sheer poetry of the passages makes me long to pack my bags for Nectar Cove, buy a shack with a view, and build a schooner from scratch like Peter Landry, the hero of this book did.

Unqualified praise? No. Some of the dialogue, like that in the restaurant between Peter and Elaine (p. 38) is a bit wooden, and Cameron should be informed (p. 270) that villains only "purr" in novels by Rosemary Rogers. And the story as a whole is a shade too neat and tidy (real life contains a few more loose ends).

But these are mere quibbles. All in all it is a fine first novel.

Latitude 53 Society of Artists Presents:



Issues in  
**CLAY:**

Western Canadian Sculpture

May 4-29 Students Union Art Gallery  
University of Alberta, Edmonton

Gallery hours: Monday to Friday 11:00 - 5:00  
Weekends 1:00 - 5:00

Opening: Monday, May 4 8:00 p.m.

with funding assistance from the Canada Council

If that's art,  
then I'm a  
Hottentot

Harry Truman