

Old Dracula returns

# Church develops new role as Theatre



Graphics by Lynn Tranter

By BRIAN WEAGANT

Traditionally, the church has not been a centre for cultural productions. White choirs, chamber orchestras and Easter oratorios use the larger churches as acoustic paradises, it's still quite rare to see plays performed within the halls of worship. The question arises — do these plays violate the sanctity of the church?

A production of Dracula has just finished a quite successful five-week run at the old United Church on Bathurst. Theoretically, a play with such subject matter has no place in the house of God. But, just the same, it was tapping the sacred atmosphere (what's left of it, anyway — the church has been all but abandoned by the congregation, who were so small that they fled to a small vestuary at the end of a hall, leaving the two sanctuaries open to invasion by theatre stages).

And amazingly, the reverence of the institution was hardly upset by the subject matter, and the reason for this probably lies with the play's treatment.

This was not the throat-clutcher of the thirties, but a neat little candy-coated shocker which did anything but revel in its nastiness. There were only two scenes in which the audience was called on to seat a little.

And it wasn't because the play was poorly produced. It's just that Dracula has had bad PR lately. This was not the Count who has terrified the masses since the appearance of Bram Stoker's classic novel in 1897. The poor man has been reduced to a character on cereal boxes and a voice in a song about some crazy dance.

I would have been a bit wary about undertaking a financial venture like Dracula, keeping in mind his modern-day status and the tone of the play. But the producers of this play disregarded these factors completely. They presented a faithful adaptation, using every possible technique to build atmosphere, including the location of the theatre.

Dracula is in England. His castle in Purly is on the border of the property of a sanatorium belonging to one Dr. Seward. Dr. Seward's daughter, Lucy, is on the verge of death, and has mysterious red marks on her throat. A Dr. Helsing from Holland, a specialist in weird diseases, is called in.

Lucy has a boyfriend, Johnathan, and the sanatorium has a resident lunatic, Renfield, who has taken to eating flies and spiders to satisfy his madness. The rest of the plot involves the detection and murder of the vampire.

The sets were fantastic — gloomy and realistic. The first-class cast over-acted and had great fun at it. There was a won't-leave-her-side type Jonathan, a Van Helsing who had obviously been watching too many movies, and a Dracula with a make-up job that would compel Cybill Shepherd to jump for joy.

In one melodramatic scene, Lucy was stretched out in her boudoir in a swoon, amid a swell of loud (very loud) organ music. The prince of darkness appeared in a dense fog which filled the room. He took Lucy in his arms, and, well, you know — I'd wager there wasn't a soul in the audience who didn't cringe a little.

And I don't think I'm destroying the surprise by saying that at the finale, Dracula got a stake in the heart. The set was a foggy crypt; the music, Toccata and Fugue by Bach (made famous via Phantom of the Opera). Dracula was stabbed through the heart, rose from his coffin and, his guts pouring out of the hole, painfully made his way up the winding stairs, where he landed on his back. And then, in winding stairs, where he landed

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Not the sort of fare you're used to seeing in a church. One could always argue that this was a play concerning good, and the Almighty triumphing over evil and darkness, but that line is getting a little over-worked.

God had left this place, and the spirit of Bela Lugosi hovered overhead, laughing knowingly.

## On Campus

Events for On Campus should be phoned in to Dawn Cotton, Department of Information and Publications (N814, Ross), telephone: 667-3441. Deadline is Mondays, 12 noon.

### Films, Entertainment,

Thursday 7:30 pm — Benefit Concert (York Daycare Centre) featuring Bill Root, Ian Craig and Amazing Grace; tickets are on sale at the Poster Shop, the York Bookstore and the Daycare Centre — admission \$2.50 — for further information call 677-3273 — L. Curtis.

Friday 8:30 pm — Boite a Chansons — Cafe de la Terrasse, Glendon.

Saturday 8 pm — Film (Bethune) "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (Sam Peckinpah) — admission \$1.00 — L. Curtis.

8 pm — Discotheque/Jam Session — everyone is welcome to bring an instrument — Cafe de la Terrasse, Glendon.

Sunday 8 pm — Film (Film Society) "Bird with Crystal Plumage" — 129, York Hall, Glendon

8 pm — Film (Bethune) "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" — admission \$1.00 — L. Curtis.

Monday 4 pm — Canadian History Films (History) "Age of the Beaver", "Voyageurs", and "Ville Marie" — A. Stedman.

Wednesday 4:15 pm — Film (Humanities 373) "Birth of a Nation" (D.W. Griffiths) — extra seating available — 129, York Hall, Glendon.

### Special Lectures,

Friday 4:30 pm — Chemistry Fall Seminar Series — "Novel Nickel (II) — Olefin Complexes. The Transformation of Nickel (II) into Palladium (II)" by Professor C.A. McAuliffe, University of Manchester, Institute of Science and Technology \$ 320, Farquharson.

Monday 2 pm — Public Lecture (Graduate Studies) "A Spectroscopic Study of a Quiescent Solar Prominence in the Vacuum Ultraviolet from Rocket Observations During the March 1970

Eclipse" by MR Chao Yuan Yang, candidate for the Ph.D. degree — 317, Petrie.

Tuesday 7:30 pm — Guest Speaker (York Pro-Life Group) "Abortion — Yes or No?" by Dr. Dawne Jubb, Obstetrician and Gynecologist at Women's College Hospital — E. Curtis.

Thursday 5 pm — York Flying Club — new members welcome — 110, Curtis.

### Clubs, Meetings

Friday 7 — 9 pm — Pottery Club — new members welcome — 013, Vanier Residence.

Monday 7:30 pm — York Bridge Club — Vanier Dining Hall 8 pm & 9 pm — Hatha Yoga — instructor is Axel MOLEMA — JCR, McLughlin.

Tuesday 7 — 10 pm — York Homophile Association First general meeting 200, Admin. Studies Bldg.

## Newsriters, Photographers, Jocks and Entertainment freaks

Staff meeting 11 a.m. today  
Room 111,  
Central Square  
All are welcome.

### Coffee Houses, Pubs,

For days and hours open, please phone the individual coffee houses:

Absinthe Coffee House — 013, Winters (2439)

Ainger Coffee Shop — Ainson College (3544)

Argh Coffee Shop — 051, McLughlin (3506)

Buttery — Founders (3550)

Cock & Bull coffee Shop — 023, Founders (3667)

Comeback Inn — 2nd Floor, phase II, Atkinson (2489)

George Coffee Shop — N108, Ross (3535)

Green Bush Inn — T.B.A. (3019)

Just Another Coffee Shop — 112, Bethune (3579)

Open End Coffee Shop — 004, Vanier (6386)

Orange Snail Coffee Shop — 107, Stong (3587)

Osgood Pub — JCR, Osgoode (3019)

Pizza Pit — 124, Central Square, Ross (3286)

Tap'n Keg Pub — JCR, Bethune (6 pm — 12:30 am, Wednesdays)

### Miscellaneous

Saturday 10 am — Recreational Soccer — field adjacent to the Tait McKenzie Building.

Monday 13:1-pm — 12:45 pm — Conditioning for Men & Women — plus casual volleyball — each Monday, Wednesday and Friday — men-main gym, women-upper gym — Tait McKenzie.

### Athletics,

Sunday 7:30 pm — Roman Catholic Mass — 107, Stedman.

Wednesday 8 pm — 10 pm — Stargazing — Twin Astronomical Observation, Petrie Science Building.