

Bengel & Jake

- The poetry and the prose

by Robert Jacobson

Bengel is a poet. He is also a copy writer for a pharmaceutical advertising company. Although he earns an excellent salary, he lives discretely, near me on the West Side, because, as he puts it "...It keeps you awaaare, baby!..."

Like most homosexuals, Bengel is very sensitive, and needs to be accepted for what he is. I'll never forget the first time I met him, because the circumstances were so exquisitely strange.

I was out on a tour of the gay sub-culture (estimates run as high as one million, living in New York alone!), and was being shown around by a gay Jesuit friend of mine, with the hopes of doing a story. We had explored the uptown, Western & Leather haunts, the West Side dock bars, like **The Spike**, and **The Rod**, (where the washrooms are labeled S & M, instead of M & F, for Sadist, or Masochist!), right down to

the Christopher Street artsy spots.

Although it was still fairly early, I had gotten rather pissed, having had a drink or so in each joint, and by about one A.M., I was ready to call it a night. When we got to the corner of my block, my friend said, "Just one more stop, Jake? There's an interesting place right up the block here," and despite the fact that I'd about had my fill of gay bars for the evening, I relented, and went along.

This bar, like all the others we had visited that evening, was crowded, and jumping, and we had to share a table with another party. Bengel was among them.

It's funny how sometimes you just hit it right off with someone, and in no time, Bengel and I were lost in a delirious, drunken conversation! Just like me, he loved cooking, and shopping in all the shops along Ninth Ave. He dug wine! Wrote poetry! Played the

piano! Liked and had read most of my favorite authors! I just couldn't believe it: instant rapport ala Plato, or what?!!?

As we were leaving (it was considerably later then), he tried to hustle me, but when I told him that I was a happily married "straight", although surprised, he didn't press it, and actually seemed a bit intrigued. Later I found out that on two occasions he'd been brutally beaten, and had received a number of fists to the jaw, just for being what he was. Maybe he felt relieved that he'd finally met a straight, who wasn't threatened by him, and who didn't feel the need to punch his face in. He went home with my Jesuit friend instead.

That weekend, my wife and I invited Bengel over for dinner. Although she was skeptical at first (to say the least!), she found his outrageous and uninhibited manner delightful, and his conversation intelligent, as

well as interesting. "...It gets to the point," he told her, "when you either have to butch-up or bitch-out! No doubt you can see which path I chose." The next week, he invited us over to his pad for a sumptuous repast, consisting of Veal Tenderlion, in an incredible sauce, with all the trimmings. Later, over numerous bottles of wine, he read some of his poetry, and we played a duet of a song I had written about him (after one of our long, protean conversations), called "Tears And Black Coffee".

We continued to see a lot of Bengel, and although every time we went over to his place he had a different lover, we were never made to feel self-conscious, or ill at ease, and actually it was though one of his connections that I was able to begin selling my work.

Well, about four months ago, Bengel was laid off, when the advertising industry fell off sharply, and

he packed up and split to Europe for awhile; attempting to get from under the heavy New York rat race, and take it easy. Anyhow, the other day, while I was truckin over to the West side after making one of my all too infrequent sales, I decided to treat myself to a real lunch, (my recent indigence had reduced me to a diet of tuna fish sandwiches), at this fabulous little French restaurant, **The Brittany de Soir**, on Ninth Ave. As I passed through the doors, I was pleasantly surprised to find Bengel sitting at a table, just back from Europe, with a cup of coffee, reading the paper ... It was as though he was waiting for me! ... Needless to say, we celebrated my minor triumph with a lunch of escargots, consume, steak tartar, and a bottle of Beaujolais '73 to wash it all down. And over a brandy and espresso, he told me all about Gay Parie! Adieu!

Jake

Odessa File good , but book can help

by Chris Hart

"**The Odessa File**" a film starring "**Midnight Cowboy**", Jon Voight is now playing at the Odeon Hyland Theatre. The film which has been in town for about two months is a screen adoption of a novel written by Fredrich Forsythe (of "**Day of the Jackal**" fame). The setting is Germany during the '60's and is about a secret Nazi organization that protects former SS war criminals who managed to escape the wrath of the allied armies. Jon Voight, who plays the role of a freelance journalist, stumbles upon a diary that was kept by an old Jew who had worded his years of confinement in a concentration camp during the war. The diary chronicles the horrors inflicted upon the inmates of

the prison camp by the commandant, an SS officer named Captain Stracher.

The diary goes on to say that Captain Stracher was seen only a few weeks ago in Hamburg.

The freelance journalist intrigued by the diary, decides to uncover the Odessa and find this Captain Stracher for himself. The most striking point of the file is the way that no one wants to help him uncover it. It seems that most Germans would rather have this part of their

heritage dead and buried, and don't kinder lightly to a young German, who doesn't even remember the war trying to unearth a lot of sorrow and misery. He decides to go on in his quest anyway, running into the Odessa every step of the way. The Odessa, through their elaborate network of spies, discover that this nuisance is trying to uncover one of their buddies and decide to eliminate him. Also, at this time, the Israeli secret service enter the scene

suspecting that an Odessa funded organization is building missiles for Egypt to rise against Israel and so they want to uncover the Odessa. They get to Jon Voight before the Odessa does, and train him to know all there is to know about the SS in order to be prepared for the entry into the **Odessa** organization. The ruse works and Voight manages to uncover the file of all SS officers wanted for war crimes, and their new identities. Through this document he discovers

what Stracher is doing for a living and where he is, so he sets out to confront the man himself. As all good stories end, the good guys win and the Israeli nation is saved from doom and destruction.

The story is a good one, but I recommend you read the book first (which is better), because then you will know more about the **Odessa** which will make the movie more entertaining.

But what have you done for me lately ?

On Tuesday, March 4th, at 12:30 in Studio I of the Arts Centre, the Dal Theatre Department will be presenting "**But What Have You Done for Me Lately**" — one Act play, by Ms. Myrna Lamb.

The production will of

Boys in the Band

by Mart Crowley

A birthday party for a member of the homosexual "circle" sets the scene for a hilarious turn of events, and no chance to "camp it up" is overlooked. The homosexual way of life is totally taken for granted, and the play allows for both the characters, and the viewer to laugh along. You'll find no "tea and sympathy" here. The event takes place in an apartment in New York City and is interrupted when a close 'straight' friend of the host arrives uninvited. The pressure then amounts to a self-revealing confrontation amongst the characters.

As Clive Barnes wrote in

the New York Times: "the power of the play is the way in which it remorselessly peels away the pretensions of its characters and reveals a pessimism so uncompromising in its honesty that it becomes in itself an affirmation of life."

The play runs March 5, 6, 7, 8 and 12, 13, 14 at 8:30 p.m. and on March 9 at 2:00 p.m. only, in the McInnes Room, 2nd floor, Dalhousie Student Union Building. Admission is \$1.50 for students, and \$2.50 for non-students. Tickets go on sale at the Central Box Office in the Dal Arts Centre and at the Dal SUB Inquiry Desk on Friday February 21, 1975.

course be a drama exercise for the cast and crew, consisting mainly of second year Acting majors, but will also be unique from most other productions at "Noon Hour" in that this play's greatest strength lies in the heavy political and emotional appeal which permeates the production.

The play exploits tools of irony, hate, fear and passion to argue one of the most volatile questions of today -- that of the right of a woman to have an abortion.

"**But What Have You**

Done for Me Lately" made its debut in New York City in 1969, performed by "The New Feminist Repertory Theatre." It's Director, Ms. Anselma Dell'Olio, has these comments: "The play is undeniably political, unceasingly and unabashedly feminist; the speeches are long, yet during every performance (and there have been hundreds before every kind of audience and under every conceivable condition, favorable and unfavorable) presented by the new Feminist Reper-

tory, attention was riveted upon the stage throughout the twenty-odd minutes running time. Clenched fists, gnawed knuckles, heads cocked to catch every word, these were a common sight...What I am trying to say is that the theatre of agitation and propaganda, normally a didactic and boring dramatic form to be avoided like the plague, has here been raised to a high artistic level. This is the author's achievement."

