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Dark light in Black Comedy

by Mavin Gates

If future productions by Wreckball Theatre fulfill the promise shown during their performance of *Black Comedy* at the Sir James Dunn Theatre of the Dal Arts Centre last Saturday night, there may well be "a renaissance in local young-company theatre". With the former Queen Elizabeth High School Drama Club at its core, the company emits a sense of refreshing enthusiasm and budding competence. However, Peter Shaffer (*Five Finger Exercise*, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *Equus*) would probably take exception to some of the liberties taken with his script.

Inspired by a classical Chinese drama in which swordsmen duel in imagined darkness while the stage is actually brightly lit, this farce is based on the premise that darkness represents light and vice versa. The great majority of the humour is dependent upon this solo device and it works amazingly well. The protagonist is Brindsley Miller, a young sculptor, who intentionally or not has managed to deceive everyone he is, or wishes to be, close to (including himself). The action takes place in Brin's apartment, where he and Carol, his supposed fiancée, await the arrival of a millionaire art collector wishing to inspect Brin's work and Carol's father, who wishes to inspect Brin. Everything seems ready until a fuse

blows and plunges the waiting couple into "darkness". The situation is further complicated by the arrival of just about everyone Brin would least like to see that particular evening.

In *Black Comedy's* present incarnation the crisp direction of Jim Spurway (who directed "Man in the Basement" for the Theatre Arts Guild's *THREE FOR TWO* in 1980) enabled the performance to flow at a comfortable and energetic pace. He may have exercised too much restraint at some points in the action, though. *Black Comedy* is essentially a visual piece as what happens is usually much more important than what is being said. I do not think it should be allowed to digress into vaudeville slapstick schtick completely, but it should come close.

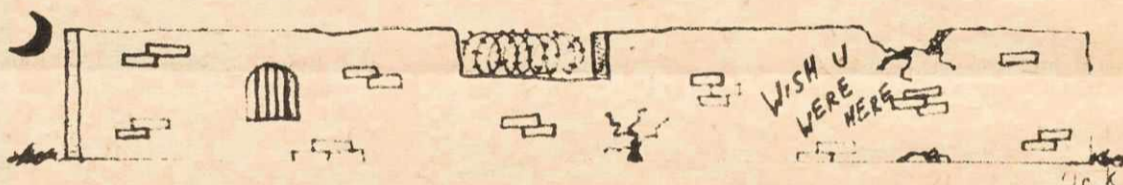
The cast, almost entirely university students, were fresh (in all senses of the word) and engendered an endearing rapport with the audience. This appeared to earn them forgiveness for their inability to suppress amusement with the material they performed.

John Jay (Brin) displayed a great gift for physical comedy. His smooth adroitness with the sometimes rebellious props and scenery made many stunts appear truly accidental rather than contrived.

Elizabeth Beeler (who appeared in *Of Mice and Men* staged last year in the S.U.B.) as the "very spoiled, very silly" Carol contrasted nicely with the mischievous, sensual Clea, played by Sue Brown. Jamie Bradley, cast as Harold, a man with "passionate feelings of a rather different nature", played his part with fine taste and reserve. He admirably resisted any temptation to turn his character into an overdone, campy stereotype.

This reluctance to portray stereotypes worked against Theresa Arneaud as the supposed transformation of the prissy Miss Furnival covered too little distance to be entirely effective. As Carol's father, Colonel Melkett, Rob Candy was suitably stiff and shooting-clubbish but appeared disturbingly young. Most puzzling, but nonetheless entertaining, was Peter Dixon, who looked like a cross between Lenin and Zonker, as the charming Schuppanzigh. Judging by his accent he had apparently immigrated to England from the Russian part of Germany. Kevin Yarr's performance as Georg Bamberger was short, but notable for his ability to disappear dramatically.

All in all the play was clever and competent fun. Unfortunately the show only ran for two performances, but I trust that we will be seeing the Wrecking Ball crew again in the near future.



All in all you're just another...

by Martin Tomlinson

Alas, the long awaited production of Roger Waters' brainchild, *The Wall* has appeared on perhaps its final conceptual stage. This takes place in the form of Alan Parker's film *The Wall*.

The Wall is a brilliant metaphorical fugue of music and imagery that leaves the viewer with a multifaceted impression as to the direction in which Roger Waters and *The Wall* is taking us. In many respects the screenplay provides images to the lyrics of *The Wall*, where before the listener might have found empty spaces. Yet, it does not limit the imagination to the interpretation of the producer, as many screenplays do.

The soundtrack is virtually identical to the album *The Wall*, released by Pink Floyd in November of 1979 - one of the greatest achievements in the recording industry in the Seventies and a true musical masterpiece. The additions to the soundtrack for the movie include, "When the Tigers Broke Free" and lyrics to "What Shall We Do Now". Other production work such as animation, adaptation to screenplay, text, technical work, etc., flow flawlessly.

The neurotic looking Bob Geldorf (of *Boombtown Rats* fame) is perfectly suited for the role of Floyd Pinkerton.

Familiarity with Pink Floyd and



Pink Floyd's album "The Wall" has finally made it to celluloid. Bob Geldorf shows off his ability to wear no eyebrows in the film.

their album *The Wall* cannot breed contempt, but only enhance the impact of *The Wall*. Waters is not throwing us back to the Sixties but he is revealing or tearing down a cosmetic wall erected by North American society to beautify its own existence. Quite honestly, reality remains a pretty gruesome spectacle, a revelation of which may throw many an unwary moviegoer.

The depression, despair, and revulsion that imagery in *The Wall* imparts hits too close to home for comfort. The world (future) is bared for inspection: but, can the

inspector be inspected? The social impact of *The Wall* is exemplary in that it is another shot in the arse for the citizen too apathetic to look at the world he could be living in. The moviegoer is forced to open his eyes when he was innocently stalling self-satisfaction at the movies.

The Wall, as a metaphorical fugue of music and images, can only truly be experienced by the individual. I urge you to attend, find your own gratification and draw your own conclusions from yet another PINK FLOYD SPECTACULAR.