

Bellini at the Birdland

As cozy and relaxing as a warm, fuzzy towel

BY TIM COVERT

Writer and Performer Paul Bellini, best known for his towelled role on *The Kids in the Hall*, is performing a musical/comedy show entitled *Canadian Living Room* at the Birdland Cabaret next Wednesday, December 6. The show starts at 10 with Dartmouth's Shag opening. Bellini is a writer on CBC's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and lives in Halifax half of the year. He came by the Gazette this past Tuesday.

Gaz: How did the towel thing come to be?

Bellini: At the beginning of second season, Mark McKinney decided he needed to know the audience profile — the demographic. Someone said a contest is good because you'll usually get a pretty good cross-section of who your loyal viewers are. We were trying to think of a good prize — you know, fly them in for a taping, dinner with the Kids — and I earlier had been telling Mark this story about me going to the YMCA, and all of a sudden Mark stood up and blurted out, "I think the prize should be Bellini in a towel!" And everybody laughed, including myself, and then there was this lull and then everybody just looked at me. And I went, "OK." And before you knew it, I was standing there in a white towel in a field being photographed. I didn't even have time to think about it. I was a really shy guy — shy about my body — and so for me to do this I obviously just had a crazy moment. And the next taping after we broadcast [that show] there were these girls from McGill holding this huge banner [which read "We Love Bellini"] who just loved the whole Bellini bit. They started a fan club and a newsletter.

Gaz: Tell me about your stereotypical Canadian living room.

Bellini: It's one where there's a big TV with lots of good Canadian TV shows on it. The genesis of this show was...I used to have all these great 45s when I was a kid. I had "Absolutely Right" by 5 Man Electrical Band, "Where Evil Grows" by the Poppy Family, "Hand Me Down World by the Guess Who"...we're doing all these songs in the show. I listened to those 45s for years until they were just scratched to shit. And I've always wanted to do an all-Canada show.

I sort of evolved the idea for a living room show. It's an idea I stole from Mark McKinney 'cause one time Mark did an improv show where he brought a couch, a coffee table, and some lamps to

the Rivoli and it was the weirdest-looking show cause it was like you were staring into someone's living room watching them do a party improv. So the basic premise is it's me, and I'm doing a little tribute to Canada.

I have a 15 year old assistant with me, his name is Reese Bevinjohn. He's a theatre student at Neptune and he's like the new Scott. Totally crazy, incredible energy, and he's got like 600 dresses of clothing he's 600 articles trying up and doing accents and stuff like that. So I have him interjecting, coming in between songs and doing little bits. And I'm also gonna show some films that Brian Hiltz [Bellini's band leader] and I made years ago when we were at York University. So the whole thing is kinda like an evening with me in my living room.

Gaz: What is your definition of Canadian rock, or the Cana-

dian rock sound?

Bellini: The songs I'm doing are all from the sixties and early seventies. I think the songs that I'm doing, the Canadian Rock that I'm doing, is really about a certain expansiveness, a kind of post EXPO '67, "We're here" type of affirmation. The CRTC content rulings kind of thrust Canadian bands onto the radio airwaves, whereas before it was all just Beatles and Motown. It wasn't hard; a lot of bands just wouldn't have had that exposure had it not been for that Trudeau-era push of Canadian culture.

Even though a lot of it seems to be hard rock or hard rock ballads, we're doing "High School Confidential" by Rough Trade — like where do they fit into the spectrum? They were like the weirdest fuckin' thing ever. To put that song in our show it really sticks out like a sore thumb because it's so bi-

zarre and yet there's something really Canadian about it.

I remember when I was a kid, like about 6 or 7, — my uncle and aunt were young at the time and they bought tonnes of records — and my uncle was really pissed. And I said, "What's wrong?" He's about seven years older than me and he said, "I just found out Steppenwolf's Canadian. What a rip-off." And all of a sudden he didn't like Steppenwolf anymore because he found out they were Canadian. And I was devastated along with him. That was a very interesting thing that was happening in the mid-sixties. It wasn't cool to be Canadian — it wasn't cool to be in Canadian bands or anything like that.

Gaz: You're working on an album with Brian Hiltz. When is that conceivably going to happen?

Bellini: Well, we just started about two weeks ago at Deep Nine; bed tracks for about four songs. I'm here till the end of March and I'd like to have all of the bed tracks done by the end of March. Then spend the summer working on lyrics and stuff like that. I might do a show at the end of March and actually just do original material. It would give me a chance to actually take the stuff we're working on now and feel it live.

Gaz: If you wanted to sum up your show in one word what would it be?

Bellini: Comfortable. Cozy. Relaxing. Soothing. I'm kinda hoping it will give off that kind of nice vibe because I just like to project warmth on stage. It's going for that kind of warm feeling.



Bellini. One Man. One Vision. One Towel.

Dal grad comes home

Kennedy orchestrates sensory blitz

THEATRE

Faust: Philosopher, Demi-God/Perpetual Motion Machine

Milkman Theatre Group
directed by David Kennedy

BY ANDY DREIFELDS

According to legend, an astrologer named Faust sold his soul to the devil to obtain ultimate power and knowledge. Marlowe wrote about it, so did Goethe.

Now the Milkman Theatre Group has written about the legend. The group is performing their work, *Faust: Philosopher, Demi-God/Perpetual Motion Machine*, over the next week.

On Monday night I usually watch football. But this past Monday I had the extreme pleasure of seeing a dress rehearsal of this play, which is directed by David Kennedy.

After a two year stint in New York, Kennedy is back in the fine city of Halifax. His new play uses dialogue from the Marlowe classic as well as Goethe's with original stuff mixed into the script. By using video clips, music, innovative lighting, and dance, the group has brought Faust into the modern age.

Putting on a suit and tie, Faust enters a world that he feels is in purgatory. It's a problem everyone faces at some point in their life and Faust is no exception. Utilizing modern issues such as safe sex, drug abuse, and alcoholism, and by integrating into *Faust*...the Invisible Man, Hitler, and The Beatles, the Milkman Theatre Group have produced a piece that hits home.

One of my favourite scenes was where Faust, played by Kenneth Wilson-Harrington, relived his college years to the tune of Helter Skelter. Throughout the performance Wilson-Harrington amazed me with his acting ability.

Michelle Horacek portrayed Mephistopheles and she was not to be outdone on the acting front. She moved and spoke with a grace that is very difficult to find in the business. Having seen some of Kennedy's previous work, I must say that once again he has left me baffled and in awe. How can one person have so much come out of their mind?

Faust...leaves you thinking, and it manages to stimulate all of the senses. It is technically marvelous, the acting is great, and Kennedy has done a superb job bringing it all together. I urge you to leave the six-pack for another day and get out to see this one.

Faust: Philosopher, Demi-God/Perpetual Motion Machine is on at the Saint Mary's Art Gallery from Wednesday, Nov. 29 to Dec. 3. Performances start at 8:30 p.m. and tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for students and seniors.

Tickets may be purchased in advance or at the door. For reservations and info call 420-5445.

THE TAWDRY TEN

CKDU 97.5 FM

TC	LC	WO	CC	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	1	4		Various Artists	The Rebirth of Cool Phive	4th & Broadway
2	25	2	◆	Len	Superstar	Funtrip
3	30	3	◆	Bob Wiseman	Accidentally Acquired Beliefs	WEA
4	2	5	◆	Ichor	Self-Titled	Meterbank
5	3	3		The Cardigans	Life	Polygram
6	24	2		Ken Nordine	Colours	Ashphodel
7	21	3	◆	No Means No	The Worldhood of the World	Alt.Tentacles
8	4	5	◆	Various Artists	Rock Hits	Sonic Unyon
9	14	4		Hole	Ask For It	Virgin
10	5	5		Boss Hog	Self-Titled	DGC

*: Local Artist
CC: Canadian Artist

TC: This Chart
LC: Last Chart

RE: Re-Entry
NE: New Entry