

Energetic sixties show not to be missed

Rock 'n' Roll
SUB Theatre to Jan. 15

review by Patrice Struyk

Don't ask me why Rock 'n' Roll isn't drawing bigger crowds than it is. I laughed all the way through the musical. Even if my brain hadn't been saturated with champagne (well, it was New Year's Eve!), I would've been laughing along with the rest of the roaring audience, the majority of whom were about 20 years older than me and could identify with the story.

Tale of martyred woman compels

Silkwood
Westmount B

Review by Gilbert Bouchard

The only fact that you can almost be totally sure of in the Karen Silkwood case is that she died. In fact, Mike Nichols' movie biography, *Silkwood* closes with a shot of her tombstone.

Ignoring the rumours that she's living in sin with Martin Bormann's clone somewhere in Brazil, everything else about Silkwood's life and hyped-up death is heavily debated. Was she or wasn't she: the boozed up union rabble-rouser, whose followers tried to explain her accidental death with a libellous conspiracy story, or the innocent oppressed workers' martyr brutally murdered by evil big business baddies.

After all, Karen Silkwood has entered journalistic mythology, and like any legend, no matter how you carve the monument, someone's going to disagree with the likeness.

Nichols' movie monument to Silkwood might have a few cracks in it, but it is generally a passable likeness. Mind you, Nichols did have to tread lightly to avoid getting his eyeteeth sued off; one draw-

The plot is uncomplicated. The band, the Monarchs, are reunited after fifteen years, ostensibly to raise money for the local sport's association. In typical reunion fashion, they can't help but look back at their youth and compare it to their life now. The inevitable questions: "What have I done with my life since then?" "Were those really the good old days?" "DID I MANAGE TO GET OUT OF MUSHABOOM?"

In a little place like Mushaboom, things were pretty dull. The big excitement was the Saturday Night dance. The guys in

the band were the hot stuff. M-A-C-H-O men. No girls allowed to sing. So the girl had to content herself with dating the bass player.

The stereotypes are all there. The girl, Shirley, is now married to the bass player, Brent. He's a reasonable one, the Dick Van Dyke clone, now an insurance adjuster. In his words, "I'm so boring I nod off just thinking about myself." Manny, whose family owned all the stores in town, got to be the Monarch's drummer because his family could afford the drums. Now he wears a three-piece suit, is always constipated, and talks to God about his stocks. Donny still sings in a band. He was the fat boy who overcame the taunts by joining the band. Chink, the "loser", still lives in Mushaboom. Vulnerable beneath his tough facade, being in the band was the closest he had come to being employed. "Now I'm just an old man," he sighs, "with my memories."

Flashing back from the present, the show pulls out bits of the Monarch's past, in a smorgasbord of music, dialogue, and visuals. Yearbook pages of girls in horn-rimmed glasses, and guys with Brillcreemed hair, and lover's lane projected onto the backdrop were very innovative. And every so often, a saxophone wail would announce the presence of the ghost of Screamin' John, the "spirit" of rock and

roll, and doubtless Mushaboom's most outrageous offspring. Cynical, reckless, wild and crazy, he died young and tragically. For every rose-coloured thought of the "good old days", he provides a more jaundiced viewpoint. A pale apparition in rock star glitter, he chuckles sarcastically and cavorts all over the stage with his microphone, screaming and twirling and speaking in rhyme. "When life begins to take its toll, first you rock and then you roll."

Screamin' John probably is most successful in appealing to all audiences. The original music is more contemporary than expected. But universal appeal? Stopping short of slapstick (thank heavens), *Rock 'n' Roll's* humour is quite dated at times. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't see that much of my generation reflected in the play. And I tried hard to find it, because this cast is terrific and could entertain anyone.

In fact, lesser actors couldn't have done so much with John Gray's material. If only to hear Babs Chula (Shirley) sing (as she finally gets to in the end!) or to wait with bated breath for the exciting appearance of Eric Peterson's Screamin' John, or to be touched by Jay Brazeau's Chink, GO see *Rock 'n' Roll*. Better yet, send your Mom and Dad, your grandparents, your aunts and uncles, your godmother...

For free food
and booze,
turn to page 2.



"Retired man and his wife at home in a nudist camp one morning in N.J." by Diane Arbous. 1963

Ring House Gallery Opening

The Nude in Modern Photography, a selection of photographs from the permanent collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, will open Sunday, January 15 at 2:00 PM at the Ring House Gallery.

Originally organized and exhibited in 1981 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, this survey of 20th century photographs is currently on tour to museums throughout North America under the auspices of The Art Museum Association of America.

This exhibition of 45 photographs, ranging from abstract studies of form to classic and unconventional portraiture, demonstrates the diversity of approaches possible to a traditional subject matter.

Whether formal, humorous, fantastic, or emotionally charged, the nude image is an adaptable vehicle for each photographer's unique message and point of view.

The Nude in Modern Photography also serves as a study of innovations and departures in 20th century use of photographic media. From the early photographs of Clarence White, Alfred Steiglitz and Heinrich Kuehn to the contemporary approaches of Vahe Guzelmian and Don Worth, this exhibition provides examples of a variety of photographic techniques.

The exhibition will continue through February 12.

For further information please contact Marian Matthews at 432-5834.

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