



The Fine Arts Building at York University

A. CLIVE COHEN

## Sean Michael Hill: the director speaks

by Sally Teodoro

A few weeks ago, I was given an assignment to do, which probably changed the course my life was to take. That's right folks, my first interview. All my editor had to say was, "I want an interview!" My immediate response was, "Yes sir, whatever you say sir!!!" And that's how I got my first interview.

My first course of action was to set up my first interview, so I did what every wise journalist before me has done. I phoned him up. It rang at least three times before a thick, masculine voice answered, "Hullo?" My first mistake I called too early.

Bewildered by the 'I'm-still-sleeping-give-me-a-break' tone of his voice, I decided to continue my quest of achieving my first interview. We decided on the time, date and place - Sean Michael Hill-Friday - 10:00 am, Fine Arts Building. After this I thought, no problem.

In order not to look as if it was my first interview, I decided to read up on Hill's play.

The first play entitled "Once Upon a Playground" is described by Hill as, 'a multi-media surrealistic piece set within the confines of a playground.' Okay, so far I know it takes place in a playground.

My second problem, what is surrealism?? Being the ever-so-thorough person I claim loudly to be, I looked up the term. It didn't help. I then looked up the term 'literature of the absurd.' Nothing. The one connection I did make was with the writer Samuel Beckett. You see, Hill put on his plays at the Samuel Beckett Theatre in Stone College.

Picking up on this subtle connection, I decided to pursue it. I asked Hill if there was any connection between him using this theatre and Samuel Beckett's writings.

"No, actually," he plainly stated. "It was the only theatre I could get."

I just blew my first question, but I continued, determined to overcome all obstacles ahead of me.

When the interview started to flow, I found myself listening to a very interesting young man.

Hill is in his second year at York, in the Director's Program in Fine Arts. I asked him if putting on the play was a requirement for his course.

"No it isn't," Hill said. "I did this play on my own."

To my amazement, I learned that the Fine Arts Department didn't help Hill one bit, not even with the funding.

"This let's us go out and do things for ourselves," Hill said. "Also, the department wants us to concentrate on our classes instead. That's why there's not many independent shows."

Hill is certainly dedicated to his type of work. Not only did he direct "Once Upon a Playground," but he wrote it as well. As Hill states, "It consists of the struggles of four people with each other, the roles they have been assigned to play, and the place they must play them in." Hill also wrote the short comic playlet that preceeded the actual play entitled, "Definitely Not Turnip." When I asked him where he got the idea, he stated it was on the subway, coming home from work.

"It's about two people going into an art gallery and while looking at a turnip, they try and analyze the painting", he said with a grin on his face. "One states that it's a statement about the environment, while the other states that it's about women and their struggle for equality. The only thing they agree about is that it's definitely not a turnip. In reality, the painting is actually about a turnip."

This is one busy person. I found him very sincere and unique. Although his plays are more modern than anything I have seen, I enjoyed them immensely.

Hill has his own sense of style, which I really liked. When I asked what his previous responses were like, he stated that basically here was where the problems occurred.

"Many of the people that come out to see independent shows are students in the fine arts program," Hill said. "Theatre students will go out to see other theatre students. My plays can easily be understood by anyone here at York."

Hill was right. My opinion of surrealistic plays have changed.

People of York University, listen up. Hill is worth seeing. He brings in his plays a different outlook on life that will leave you waiting for his next production. Engrave his name in your mind. If "Once Upon a Playground" is any indication of his future, Sean Michael Hill should have a very good one.

## Cheap Trick returns from the 70s Lines are showing

by Bruce Adamson

Cheap Trick  
Opera House

If the Grammy folks gave an award for sheer endurance in the music biz, Cheap Trick would undoubtedly be the hands down winner.

The Illinois quartet's quirky pop sensibility sent them rocketing to the top of the charts in the late 70s; *In Colour*, *Heaven Tonight*, and *Live At Budokan* were huge albums, establishing the band as one of the world's biggest rock acts.

However, the 80s saw the proverbial rug get pulled out from under the Trickster's guided feet.

A series of major flops and personnel problems fuelled their descent into delete bin hell. I remember getting a postcard from a friend who lived in L.A. at the time saying that Rick Nielson and company had just played a gig at his high school! Gads!

Lately, fate has been kinder to Cheap Trick. Their timely cover of Elvis' "Don't Be Cruel" was a big hit; in addition, they're back on the hockey rink circuit doing that opening act thing.

Last Saturday the band got to stretch out by headlining their own show at the newly opened Opera House.

Cheap Trick  
Cheap TrickRICK  
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The show was opened by the horrendous *Siagon Kick*, who put more effort into shaking their finely coiffed tresses about than into their music. These guys have little show and no go.

Cheap Trick got on around 8:30 and immediately dug into their burgeoning 70s flashback catalogue.

Neilson, in full goofball regalia, provided most of the visual excitement. He pulled out every trick in the guitar hero book, be it climbing over roadcases, tossing oodles of guitar picks into the crowd, or donning new and consecutively wilder guitars for each song.

This stood out in sharp contrast to vocalist Robin Zander, who sounded great but appeared absolutely bored

with the six string circus orbiting around him.

During solo breaks and power-chord endings Zander could often be found standing next to a guitar amp, having a smoke or chatting with a roadie. Come on buddy, break a sweat for crying out loud!

The rhythm section was solid but unspectacular. Bassist Tom Peterson, apparently fed up with four-string basses, decided to play 12-string bass all night. The result was an unremitting low end rumble which overpowered the rest of the band and blew dry my hair.

The show was a predictable mix of old classics and new material, and the crowd responded accordingly.

"Clock Strikes Ten", "California Man", and "Surrender" went over like gangbusters, while "Don't Be Cruel" and the newly released, "If You Need Me" fell upon largely indifferent ears. But who cares about the new stuff anyway? Cheap Trick is a retro band thriving on its geeks-and-teen-heartthrobs image and catchy pop repertoire.

However, the lines are beginning to show. With the exception of Neilson's schtick (this guy should get together with David Lee Roth), Cheap Trick is getting lazy, and that vibe came across loud and clear.

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