

Tremblay cont.

Continued from page 6

people sit isolated from each other on stage, momentarily bursting into spasms of frenzy, lust and fleeting social comment.

However, a connection is finally made between the two characters — they had both lived on "The Main" in Montreal as children. When this is revealed, the audience can begin to grasp the play. The final revelation is that Manon and Sandra are actually one person. Manon is a figment of Sandra's imagination, or it could be that Sandra is a figment of Manon's imagination — who knows . . . it's certainly not the audience. This weakens the play because the audience is forced to waste energy figuring out these strange theatrical ploys rather than pondering the subject matter.

One of the major problems with the play is that the subject of transvestites is very delicate for the stage. First, it's only relevant to a small

number of people and second, the audience is reluctant to accept the subject unless it's presented in a comic manner. Hence, with a play like *Damnee Manon, Sacree Sandra*, the attention span of the audience is lost very quickly.

Patricia Bell (Manon) and Richard Gishler (Sandra) did very well with what they were given. They brought as much to their role as the author would allow. The lack of movement on stage was a definite hindrance, but one which the actors overcame. And for this they deserve respect. It's difficult to effectively develop a good character when stationed in a rocking chair for an hour and a half.

The problems which exist in this production of *Damnee Manon, Sacree Sandra* are essentially Tremblay's fault. A concrete story line in his works would help his plays considerably. Hopefully Tremblay will someday fulfill his great potential.

Parsons has a new project

Successive musical eras have seen composers plant the seeds of program music via the opera, the lied, the symphony and the symphonic poem. In the world of rock, however, thematic music is still at its infant stage.

Thirteen years ago, this mode was ushered in by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones with *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and *Their Satanic Majesties Request*. Both enjoyable albums seemed to be the door-opener for the entire stream of artists and albums.

Probably the strongest artist to emerge was Alan Parsons who, ironically, assisted the Beatles with some of their production. This experience was a real asset when Parsons began issuing his own material in the early 70's under the auspices of The Alan Parsons Project. Interesting, well-known themes, set to exciting, lively rock were the main characteristics of Parsons' work and these most likely contributed to the band's popularity.

Parsons' motifs have been in vogue. He capably captured the essence of Edgar Allen Poe when *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* was released. Poe's literature of suspense, mystery and the macabre was vividly portrayed by Parsons and entourage.

In a later work, Parsons capitalized on the pyramid power trend when his group released *Pyramid*. Lyrically sound, the album not only depicted the pyramid fad but also commented on the pyramids of politics, fame and success as illustrated in the songs, "What Goes Up . . .," "The Eagle Will Rise Again," and "Shadows of a Lonely Man."

Again, on his last release, *Eve*, Parsons has undertaken an ambitious theme, one that may not be embraced by the so-called "modern" day man and woman, particularly the latter. His interpretation of this proverbial theme is fresh and vibrant, but Parsons is tough on the "glitter and gold." Parsons' version takes a modern twist with *Eve* decked out in flashy costumes, cheap furs and gaudy make-up. And although fewer tracks are devoted to Adam's point of view, he too comes across as an icy figure.

Nonetheless, all is not lost on *Eve*. Parsons' instrumentals are quite good, especially "Secret Garden," where the main events occur. Other highlights include the disco-paced tune, "Winding Me Up," and the didactic "Don't Hold Back."

While *Eve* is sure to insult some, and while it is not one of Parsons' most outstanding works, it does offer some enjoyable moments. Its theme will

attract, repel, and in the words of the Beatles (Sergeant Pepper), "a good time will be had by all."



Manuel Barrueco performing for the Classical Guitar Society of Edmonton at the Provincial Museum

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