

# Jealousy rampant

by donalee moulton

Neptune opened the winter season last Friday with the first performance of Othello. Under the directorship of John Neville, Shakespeare has come a long way from former, and blander, Rentonesque days. But surprisingly, Neville is not the star of the show, even if he is the mastermind.

Othello is a Moorish nobleman who falls prey to both the charms of the beautiful Desdemona and the evil seeds of jealousy planted by Iago. Desdemona is Othello's wife; Iago his enemy determined to revenge Othello for slighting him. "Othello" is the story of

Iago's plan for revenge, its implementation and its outcome. Othello is one of Shakespeare's best tragedies but its stage success requires a professional cast and characterization.

Neville has left Othello as Shakespeare wrote it, tending to the traditional interpretation of the tragedy. Such traditionalism accents the good / evil theme but requires a more controlled performance from the actors.

John Neville as Othello gives such a controlled performance that at times it seems too controlled, almost arrogant and indifferent. In contrast, Eric Schneider, as

Iago, is forceful, manipulative and totally engrossing. It is, surprisingly, the supporting cast that makes the show. Besides Schneider, Gabrielle Rose, as Desdemona, is superb. It is obvious that she is acting. Her verbal performance is not her strong point, rather it is her movement and expression which elevate her acting.

The highlight of the drama is Emilia (Susan Wright). As Iago's wife, Emilia is a peripheral character until it becomes apparent that there is no avoiding death and downfall. It is at this point that Emilia asserts herself in both the written play and its performance. Wright, as Emilia, is masterful. She knows her character and she brings her to life. Wright is the one performer among the cast who has the natural ability to move her audience.

But all is not perfection on the set of Othello. David Schurmann, as Cassio (Othello's successor), is a cross between Glen Campbell and L'il Abner. He did not deliver a dramatic performance. It is in fact debatable whether any meritable performance whatsoever was delivered. Shakespeare is not for Schurmann, he only upsets the balance of the production. Likewise, many of the supporting cast were stiff and seemingly unsuited to their role. However, for many, it was their first professional appearance and time may be all that is needed.

Credit must be given to the set designer. Not only was the set functional and an appropriate atmosphere creator, it was an ingenious piece of artistry. Applause must also be given to the costume designers who not only worked their sewing machines but also their imaginations.

Neptune has produced a first-rate production and congratulations must be extended to all those involved, many of whom are for the first time. Neptune has needed new blood, and here needed professional and experienced people. It appears to now have both.

## Travers in town

# Love, Peace and all that stuff

by Cheryl Downton

Again it was a case of being in the wrong place at possibly the wrong time; both the performer and her audience seemed a little ill at ease in the near emptiness of the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium. A feeling of closeness and more warmth would have been given and received within the walls of a smaller more intimate setting. But, as is often necessary, one has to make due with what has been offered, and so it was that Mary Travers and a small band of listeners spent part of a Friday evening together.

Mary Travers, one third of the long gone but not forgotten folk trio of Peter, Paul and Mary, has been performing as a solo artist since the demise of the group as a threesome. As part of a promotional package for her latest album, Travers is conducting a national tour, with hopes of maintaining an interest which has been around since the early days of P, P and M.

Predictably, those who attended the concert were people who have not forgotten the musical closeness created by this folk group. A sense of searching for something that has been lost was in evidence, as well as a feeling of respect for an artist who didn't quit because the usual and accepted vehicle for expression no longer existed. Travers is able to appeal to both sentiments, and has emerged as an independent performer, more than capable of 'making it' on her own merits.

The concert was a mixture of the old and new, and while ardent P, P and M followers were placated with such long remembered trio trademarks as *500 Miles*, *Leaving on a Jet Plane*, and *Blowin' in the Wind*, listeners were exposed to the material of a performer who is not satisfied to live solely with accepted memories. Songs written by David Buskin, Elton John, Melissa Manchester, and Mary Travers were part of the programme. A song of her own composition, *Sweet Survivor*, an answer to the oft posed question—"well what do you

believe in now?" contains the lines which perhaps express the author's response: "For everything that matters, carry on."

Although Travers maintained a strong dislike for nostalgia, she herself is caught in its web. It is impossible to separate one's self from one's roots and beginnings. The solution appears to be an even mixing of emotions. In relating the story of a summer reunion with Peter and Paul about which Peter wrote a song entitled, *Like the First Time*, Travers talked of the feelings of mutual love and respect within the group; "When I sing it alone, I'm not alone. I can make it on my own, but they will always be a part of me."

If the Halifax concert is an indication of what Travers can expect from Canadians and visa versa, monetary gain will be slight, if even existent, but an enriching of entertainment and bygone memories will most certainly be achieved.

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# Halifax in to the big time

by William Dodge

Hello, Nova Scotia

This is the candyman with music for your mind and body! Just when you felt apathetic enough to accept that Halifax could never attract your top performers in the music world, Sid Bernstein, "the man who introduced the Beatles to America," arrived here to talk business with local interests who want to bring more music to the Maritimes.

Impressario, promoter, producer, innovator, manager, agent, "a doer and darer," Bernstein wants to introduce the Maritimes to the kind of music we've been missing. All he asks for is a little feedback from university students to find out what wild, exotic tunes the folk want to hear.

Bernstein has big hopes for Halifax's new metro centre which is now in the process of finding a top quality sound system. The man who introduced the Rolling Stones to America the same year as the Beatles, who managed the careers of the Rascals, Melba Moore, Laura Nyro and Phoebe Snow, is talking about a tentative, first concert date at the metro centre sometime in late January or February.

Also, while in Nova Scotia last week, Bernstein checked out a potential 175-acre, outdoor concert site. He said the property was "breathtaking," a natural "amphitheatre" in which he hopes to stage Atlantic Jam No. 1 sometime in July.

The media at SMU has

begun a survey to determine what their students want to hear, upon the suggestion of Sid Bernstein, and there is talk of SMU and DAL pooling entertainment resources to bring traditionally more expensive and unobtainable acts to Halifax.

So what is Sid Bernstein's Organization offering Halifax in the common dollars-and-sense language of a promoter. Simply, the bigger and better in the music industry, if enough people show some interest.

But now that Bernstein's "we're hip to it" hype has been faithfully reported (in the guise of another free, university news story), it's only fair to lucubrate on the nature of his sudden sincere interest, in an un-developed market of ears known as Maritime students.

And my interpretation of this otherwise straight forward, vacuum-cleaner-sales-promotion type of story, is that Sid Bernstein is very good at what he does, turning culture into candy.

Why not, if "the kids love it?" The sad truth is I have a sweet tooth, I only wish I didn't after meeting a character like Sid.

This calls to mind one of R.D. Laing's more definitive knots, from the slim but rich volume simply titled, 'Knots'.

"They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game."

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