

# TELEVISION GUIDE and ENTERTAINMENT SUPPLEMENT

## *GODSPELL ENCHANTS ,*

## *DELIGHTS AUDIENCE*

by Ron Norman

Who would have ever imagined having fun, and a lot of it, at a play where the hero dies at the end? Monday night GODSPELL opened a three week run at the Neptune Theatre to a full, warm reception. The evening was a success for everyone in attendance (except the couple in front of me who happened to be there a week early - their tickets were for the next Monday's performance).

I arrived at the theatre my hands smelling of peanut butter (the old student staple), after having placed a couple of bricks in front of the wheels of my VW (I have no emergency brake and there seems to be nothing but hills around Sackville and Argyle). I strolled

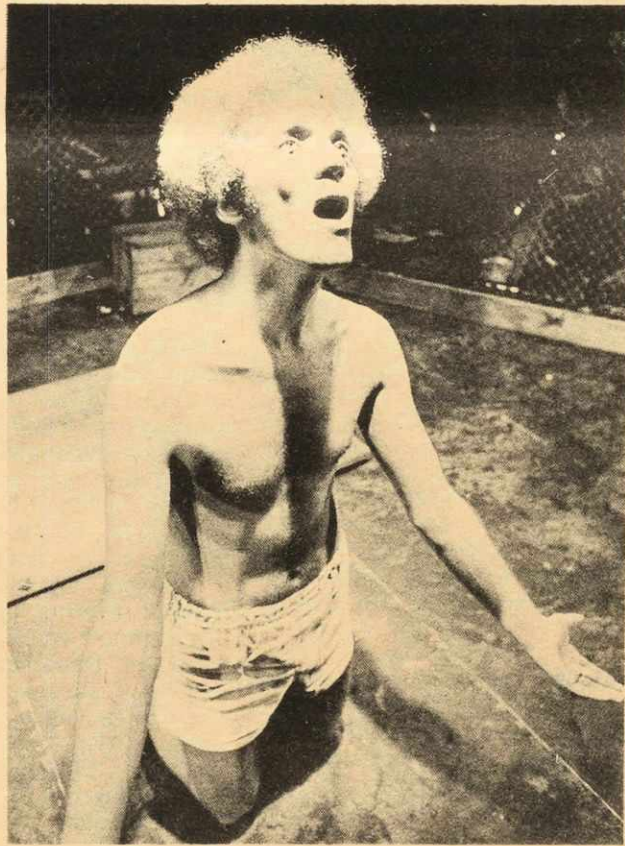
merrily into the bright blue corner theatre. Aha! What's this? People filling up the place already - it's only twenty to eight. Now where's N-5? Ah - here it is! All sorts of interesting people start filling seats - not all young people either - something I'd gotten used to seeing at Dal. Then the show begins - and what a show!

Smoothly, unexpectedly, and quite nonchalantly the characters assume possession of the stage (which is ingeniously fitted). Working with a seemingly infinite variety of theatrical routines, ranging from pantomime to vaudeville and including magic, ventriloquism, rock, folk, song and dance and whatever else your imagination can dream of (including game shows), the company

held the stage and the audience magnificently.

The theme of the play revolves around the precepts and parables from the gospel of St. Matthew (with a little of St. Luke thrown in here and there). However, don't expect any other similarities between this show and the one at your local Christian Church - the style, attitudes and feelings emitted by this company outdo anything I've ever heard in church! By joking, laughing, shouting, crying, acting, dancing, and singing (have I left out anything?) the whole Neptune Theatre filled up with a warmth and joy not usually revealed in public places.

By simply beginning the fun with such pompously stern characters like Buckminister Fuller, Socrates,



and Nietzsche (as names printed on sweatshirts), the proverbial die is cast right in our faces. Jesus appears, full of open fun, dressed in a Superman shirt with a colorful red heart painted on his forehead; from there on the show gets even better. Marc Connors plays Jesus and is more than outstanding in his performance. He establishes not a one-dimensional character, but a multi-personal hero who laughs, cries, shouts and even gets angry, while all the time preserving a carnival-like atmosphere which envelops the stage.

The remaining members of the cast are costumed in equally absurd clothing and perform equally as well as

Connors. P.M. Howard portrays a superb John the Baptist and provides the complement to Connors' clownish joy. The dancing, singing, and fun radiated by the rest of the cast make the show complete. My favourite sequence was a soft shoe, song and dance routine, by Jesus and John the Baptist. Once having created the circus atmosphere the multi-talented cast easily sustained the radiant joy. Several hours after the play I found myself still laughing and singing. The visual and verbal effects make this a play that should not be missed. GODSPELL seems an appropriate title for this spellbinding play.