

Fine Arts Festival turns into frigid Icecube

By R.D. MACPHERSON

Last week saw the staging of the second installment of the York Icecube, following last year's pilot episode. Knowledgeable readers will recall that the Art Gallery of Ontario was still presenting The European Iceberg about this time last year—thus the mildly humorous but unfortunately persistent play on words which yielded "Icecube"—and will recall that show was intended to introduce Torontonians to the exciting world of post-war European artistic accomplishments. What the Iceberg brought to Toronto was, in actuality, a retrospective collection of work by artists who have largely slipped from consequence in the art world: a virtual museum by its archaeological approach. Curiously, the York Icecube, too, suffers from inconsequence, but for different reasons.

For the past two years, the Icecube has replaced a freshly-deceased Fine Arts Festival, a now aged brainchild of someone who never left a mechanism to actuate or give birth to it. Indeed, the pathologically inept Fine Arts student government seems unable to effect anything. That the Icecube occurs at all is wholly by virtue of the efforts of a small handful of visual arts students; however, the Icecube betters the dead Festival only in that it exists, for it is not representative of the Fine Arts students. It is a hastily and insufficiently organized event which lapses frequently into parody, in order to add or affect content—witness the recurring "angst" theme, something as alien to North York as the Festival.

It is plain that if York's Fine Arts programme is to get the exposure it deserves, then some sort of effective and meaningful annual show must be organized. But I would argue that



This year's Icecube Festival featured a wide variety of events, from a barbeque and a pie-baking contest to performances by York's music, dance and theatre students, and the Creative Home Decorating Show by visual arts students.

Above: the infamous Icecube banner; right: scenes from the IDA Gallery show.

this must be done at the administrative level, and should involve an external arts manager, for the student body has proven itself radically unable to facilitate such promotion. We should learn from the success of the OCA Open House concept, held at the end of the year and orchestrated with all the departments in mind. Should we effect similar measures, we would likely experience a genuine festival.

Given the continuation of the present fractious system, we will be continually presented with the work of only a handful of students, whom the Fine Arts Council will be required to recognize if only to save respectability in the face of its own incompetence.

Vanier's melodramatic romp a great success

By J. MARK SPROUL

Ask yourself: "When was the last time you saw a real live melodrama?" Not a domestic tragedy, but a real melodrama—live. A play in which one cheers the hero and heroine, jeers the villain, and is caught up in a whirlwind of singing, screeching, contrived meetings, and chance evasions, with a pianist to pound the keys during those oh so intense clashes between good and evil. If you haven't had a romp through melodrama for a while, you've missed the perfect opportunity last week (Feb. 4-8) in Vanier College's production of *East Lynne*, a play adapted from Mrs. Henry Wood's nineteenth century novel.

Melodrama of the nineteenth century maintained a popularity similar to that of soap operas today. *East Lynne* was one of the most popular melodramas of its time. Sometimes called the grandmother of melodrama, *East Lynne* has all the required components—a musical score, a vile villain, a too tragic heroine, and a heart-throb hero. In fact, director Fred Thury's purpose for doing this play was to show that "melodrama had historic importance in the development of North American drama." The play, according to Thury, was a wonderful "tool for looking back to the future."

One aid used to help the audience appreciate the historical significance of the play was the addition of 'Notes From The Management' in the program such as; "Ladies with hats more than four-feet in diameter or plumes larger than three-feet in length coiled or uncoiled, are asked to seat themselves in the last rows,"

and "Gentlemen are asked to refrain from spitting on the theatre floorboards during the performance."

The use of a chorus added much to the spectacle of the melodrama. Entrances by the hero and heroine were accompanied by cheers, while jeers and hisses greeted the poor villain. He wasn't a bad actor, it was just the convention established by the chorus to participate in the action. Later on in the play, when Lady Isabel, the heroine, decides wrongfully to elope with the villain the chorus warns her "No. No, don't do it—it's a trick!" This banter continues throughout, until the second act when not only does the chorus interject in the dialogue, but the audience also begins to boo and hiss the actions, to their own delight. Although this audience involvement is not generally a part of melodrama, it served to involve the audience in the action and encouraged them to relax and have a good time.

Since the play was staged in Vanier's dining hall, there were obvious problems in building the set, maintaining too-dim house lights, and in blocking sight lines with level seating. These were painful distractions since the unique program was meant to be read before the performance, and some actions were hard to see from the first row back.

However, performances, such as Lady Isabel's played by Linda Hockley, and Archibald Carlyle, played by Cameron Gourley, were enough to bring anyone forward in their seats so that sight lines were created with the extra effort caused by interest.

East Lynne was a hilarious romp through a Victorian love-affair. The

Dance survival kit

By NICOLE DESJARDINS

Fine Arts teachers are constantly emphasizing the importance of attitude, technique and professionalism, basic elements of the survival kit for all artists which are sometimes taken for granted. Last week's Dance Lab demonstrated these qualities that students are striving towards.

As Faculty member Gail Benn performed her work-in-progress "Angels," she definitely practiced what she teaches in class. Encompassing the audience with dramatic, hypnotic energy, she travelled around the floor rising and falling, recovering and turning, jumping and reaching in her solo piece about searching and despair.

Thirteen others pieces choreo-

graphed and performed by York Dance students attempted to reach this quality. Michelle Farwell's "Speaking In" was a fair attempt in which she and Kerri Weir portrayed a competitive, hypocritical relationship between two friends. Weir was most stunning in her facial expressions and body gestures, drawing laughter from the audience. Kerri Weir also presented her new work, "Not your Average Sunday Afternoon Stroll in the Park," in which she portrayed four different characters interacting with each other. This Third Dance Lab definitely showed the progress students have made through the year. The other pieces in the lab clearly demonstrated more maturity and self confidence. The next Dance Lab is March 13.

her—choruses of boos and hisses. The lascivious Levison persuades Isabel to elope with him and the tragedy really begins.

Gourley's performance as Archibald was virtuous and McDonald's as Levison was truly despicable—perfectly juxtaposed. But the over-acted, over-strenuous operatic soliloquies and warbling songs of Hockley's Lady Carlyle were perfectly performed so that, even though she died, the audience was glad to have her shut up. Her dying scene was one of the longest in the play. The audience was relieved (sadly), when it was over.

Produced this way, this melodrama was not only funny, tragic and campy, but involved the audience in a way not achieved normally in the eighties and may have been one of the few chances to see melodrama in the eighties—1980s that is.

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Readings Readings Readings

York University Reading '86 presents A Literary Evening with Sonja Dunn—storyteller, Carole Leckner—writer and poet, Bob Barton—storyteller
Feb. 20, 6 p.m., S201 Ross

Film Film Film Film Film Film Film Film

York Student Christian Movement Film Series: Focus on Feminism
Feb. 25/26: Not A Love Story (a film about pornography), S169 Ross, 5 p.m.

Theatre Theatre Theatre Theatre Theatre

Dusa, Fish, Stas & Vi, a presentation of the 4th year theatre ensemble
Matinees: Feb. 14, 12 noon; Feb. 13 & 14, 8 p.m.
Tickets available at Burton Auditorium box office, weekdays noon-2:30 p.m.



Samuel J. Zacks Gallery, until Feb. 20

Installation by Joan Frick

Glendon Gallery, until Feb. 16

Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind: Some New Irish Art

AGYU and Winters College Gallery, Feb. 10-Mar. 23

Music Music Music Music Music Music Music

Radio York presents Big King Corpse and Amoeba

Quiche Open End Pub, Feb. 26, 8:30 p.m.

Galleries Galleries Galleries Galleries Galleries

Matrix Exhibition

IDA Gallery, Feb. 10-14

Photography Area Exhibition

IDA Gallery, Feb. 24-28

A Night in the Disappearing House, the recent work of Cathy Steadman

Founders Gallery, Feb. 24-Mar. 2

Simplistic and the Weimar Republic, original satirical drawings from pre-Nazi Germany

