

ARTS

La Traviata worth a Bravo

La Traviata is wonderful. The Edmonton Opera Association has scored a triumph in their first production of the year. Verdi's beloved opera of the love of a young man for a popular yet frail courtesan, their broken affair and her eventual death was very well received once again by the local audience.

"La Traviata" means "the fallen one", and the tale is based on a play by Alexandre Dumas fils in which he recounted a tale based on his own love for a Parisian courtesan. The program recounts how the premier of 'La Traviata' in Venice in 1853 was a flop, partially due to the fact that the soprano weighed close to 300 pounds, thus straining the audience's imagination to the breaking point when she died of consumption in the last act.

The plot of the opera is that a young man (Alfredo) falls in love with a courtesan (Violetta), woos her and ends up living at her villa. The young man's father (Germont) successfully implores the woman to leave him for the sake of his family's good name. Alfredo is jealous and insults her by hurling his gambling winnings at her feet. But eventually he learns of her sacrifices, and the two are reconciled on her deathbed.

Allan Monk stood out in the role of Germont. His voice was rich and resonant, and his acting ability quite convincing. Although he was the more impressive of the baritones, Raymond Gibbs turned in a very respectable performance in the role of Alfredo.

All three of the central characters turned in persuasive performances in challenging roles, but Mariana Nicolesco was excellent in the part of Violetta. The highly acclaimed young soprano has won renown for past performances around the world, including some 200 performances in this role. Her 1977 New York debut



Mariana Nicolesco as Violetta in *La Traviata*

as Violetta was hailed as the sensation of the season.

The sets were rather mediocre, but given the limits of production at the Jubilee, not bad. A workmanlike effort by the orchestra contributed to making this much better than last year's production of *Carmen*.

The musical score doesn't dominate the opera, rather the emotional intensity of the piece itself.

If you see this show, you are virtually guaranteed to go around humming the songs the next day. An "Encore!" and a few "Bravo's!" are definitely called for.

photo Ray Giguere

Threshold a superb film

by S. Bertles

The manager of the Cineplex 9 theatre warned me not to mention that *Threshold* is a Canadian film. "It's the kiss of death", he said. "We get a really good little film like this in, but if people find out it is Canadian they won't go near it."

I refuse to believe that people (even Canadians) will avoid a movie just because it was made in their own country. If they are that narrow, it is their loss. *Threshold* is a fine movie about a topic that affects us all at one time or another — modern medicine. Plus, it has one quality that is difficult to find in Hollywood movies — it is believable.

This is the first film I have seen that presents the medical profession in any kind of a realistic way. Donald Sutherland (of course) stars as a world famous heart surgeon. He's seen at the operating table in the beginning and end of the movie. This is not another M*A*S*H*, however. The doctor is not a wacky partier or a crusader against disease. He is a man who cracks corny jokes and shows off his ex-patients like a salesman showing off used cars, but Sutherland never lets you forget that he is, first and foremost, a professional. He does this as much by gestures as words — automatically reaching for a pulse or flipping his labcoat aside before sitting down.

Sutherland and another researcher develop the first human artificial heart. The implant it (against the decision of the hospital board) in a young woman as a last ditch effort to save her life. It works; the media goes crazy; and the doctor is left to cope with the patient's anxieties while the researcher goes off on the talk show circuit.

The surgeon ends up being torn in two directions. On the one hand, he sees how needless suffering and death can be prevented, and on the other he can empathize with the young patient's conflicting emotions when she discovers she no longer has a "real" heart. This causes him to re-consider his own role, and the degree to which he should interfere with the natural process of life.

This is a complex issue, and the movie tries to cover too much. Mare Winningham, as the patient, conveys her confusion through facial expressions, but there is not enough time to explain it. We know she is troubled, but we never find out exactly what she thinks.

In spite of this, the movie is well worth seeing. It may be difficult for some people to get used to a movie that doesn't have a cute alien or a talking computer, but the nifty shots of a modern operating room look enough like science fiction to make up for a lack of special effects. In fact, the whole thing is beautifully filmed.

In short, *Threshold* is a well made, interesting film. People should go see it — even if it is Canadian.

ROUNDABOUT

Robby Krieger - Versions
A&M/Passport PL 5007

by Nate LaRoi

What this album needs is a great big sticker on the cover saying "I used to be with the Doors". This statement of fact could be followed by about ten exclamation marks and a small post-script "so please buy my album". It might not be such a bad idea because, frankly, I think the ex-Doors guitarist is going to need all the help he can get selling this one.

History isn't exactly on his side either. The two reggae discs he did with the Butts Band and *Robby Krieger and Friends*, his 1977 solo

Film Trivia Quiz Answers

1. Rock Hudson in *Magnificent Obsession*.
2. Bob Dylan made his screen debut.
3. Robert Altman directed them in *A Wedding*.
4. *Annie Hall*. She was the female half of the "ideal couple" - vacuous and empty-headed with nothing intelligent to say.
5. Groucho, Harpo, Chico, Zeppo and Gummo. Gummo left early and Zeppo after five films.
6. They were all film critics and scholars before becoming directors.
7. *The Silent Partner*
8. Donald Sutherland
9. *MacBeth*
10. Sam Peckinpah



The Formolo & Urban Dance company are coming to SUB December 10 & 11.

album, were all deleted almost upon release.

Nevertheless, despite all the record company hype, *Versions* is not going to be the record that gets Mr. Krieger back on the radio. It's far too eccentric for one thing. There's nothing holding these ten songs together; *Versions* is one giant melting pot — there is no focus at all. Krieger's four originals range from Heavy Metal to jazz; the six covers include songs by artists as far apart as the Pretenders, the Four Tops, and the Rolling Stones.

More serious from the viewpoint of radio playability, *Versions* is totally instrumental. When Krieger starts going through Keith's chunky guitar lead in "Street Fighting Man", it just doesn't seem right without Mick's equally chunky vocal. Similarly, without Chrissie Hynde's insistent bitching, even loads of fancy slide guitar, video game sound effects, and a simulated car crash can't save Krieger's copy of the Pretenders' "Tattooed Love Boys" from being anything more than an interesting oddity.

Robby Krieger's originals, however, fare somewhat better (maybe next time he'll make an album called *Originals!*). "Her Majesty" and

"Under Waterfall" — which at least were meant to be instrumental — both feature pleasant two-guitar harmonizing and a smooth jazz feel.

I do not in any way wish to take away from Robbie Krieger's contribution to the Doors. Krieger's free-rolling guitar in "Break on Through to the Other Side", the first track on the first Doors album, is permanently etched on my mind. And we must remember that it was Krieger not Morrison who wrote most of the Doors' now-familiar radio hits (ie: "Light My Fire", "Touch Me", "Love Her Madly").

But whatever genius Krieger then possessed, it simply isn't apparent on *Versions*. This album, I'm sure, will only reinforce the popular misconception that Jim Morrison was the Doors. The worst atrocity on this LP, in fact, is the reworking of "The Crystal Ship", which turns Morrison's psychedelic gem into a tepid bit of background music.

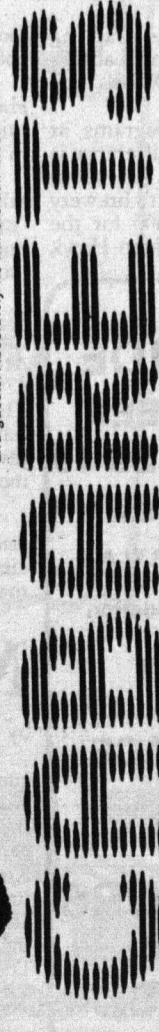
Perhaps this illustrates the fundamental difference between Jim Morrison and Robby Krieger: while Jim Morrison had his mind on acid, Robby Krieger is thinking more along the lines of after-dinner cocktails.

Tickets are available from the SUB Box-Office (2nd Floor, SUB) and various club members.

DINWOODIE

2nd Floor SUB.

Note: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests. Absolutely no minors admitted!



DARKROOM with special guests **The Citizens**
Friday, December 3
Sponsored by Bash-on-a-Budget Ski Club
\$4.00 advance ticket includes chance at Free Ski Trip and Oiler tickets.

SLASH and the BLEEDING HEARTS
Saturday, December 4
Sponsored by Tae Kwon Do Club
\$5.00 Advance; \$6.00 at the door.

SANTA STOMP
Friday, December 10; 3 - 6 pm. only
featuring TOKYO VOGUE from Winnipeg

Sponsored by Engineering Students' Society
All proceeds to charity



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DECEMBER