

## Celebrating The Year Of The Boar

Peter Lee  
demon-  
strating the  
martial art  
form  
known as,  
Kali

photo by Kent  
Rainville



by Jethelo E. Cabilete

February 4, 1995 was a time of celebration and festivity at the SUB Ballroom. The Overseas Chinese Students Association (O.C.S.A.) celebrated the Chinese New Year in a wonderfully original style this year. Unlike the Roman Calendar New Year on January 1, the Chinese New Year follows the Chinese lunar year. Following the second full moon after the Winter Solstice, the Chinese New Year can take place anytime between January 22 to the February 24. A possible origin of the animal signs is based on the legend of Buddha's summoning of the animals of Heaven and Earth. The animals who answered the call, were rewarded with a lunar month named after them. This year is the Year of the Boar, or Pig.

The setting on this night, was simple yet effective; a few oriental fans and two lamps near the stage created the desired effect. What really made the evening worthwhile, were the people, the performers, the organizers and guests. The atmosphere was festive and celebratory, people chatting with each other, children noisily asking questions and so on. The music playing throughout the night, ran the gamut of Asian pop, dance, traditional and romantic. Beginning with the traditional Lion Dance, symbol of good luck and prosperity, this Chinese New Year was different than previous years. For one thing, the Lion Dance was performed in front of a background of a video-cast display of Lion Dances that took place in China. The second difference was in the presentation of the event. Instead of a variety show, the event was run more along the lines of a celebration party. A few performances were planned, but all in all, the changes were refreshing.

O.C.S.A. Advisor, Professor A. Lister and Dean of Science, Dr. Israel Unger, gave opening speeches on the New Year celebration, and the nature of the Chinese New Year, along with some fortunes based on the Chinese zodiac. Then the New Years supper began with many appreciative comments by the audience. These cultural meals never fail to amaze and delight the people who come to these events. This year boasted some new dishes along with all time favourites, such as seasoned rice, steamed chicken, beef with pineapple and sweet and sour spareribs. During the meal, a video presenta-

tion of China displayed the rich diversity and flavour of this culture. The exotic locales and scenes were a blend of the traditional and the modern, from Chinese rock videos to images of traditional religious practices.

One of the other changes to the events planned, was a karaoke that was held the entire evening. The end of the meal signalled the start of the performances of the evening, beginning with a karaoke performance of a modern Cantonese pop song performed by O.C.S.A. vice-president, Eddie Chan and one of the O.C.S.A. organizers, Lisa Hui. The remaining animal fortunes were read, after which the audience was presented with a martial arts display by Peter Lee. The form that Mr. Lee demonstrated, was Kali, a martial art form based on Muslim fighting styles. Kali utilizes bare-hand and weapons styles; the weapons being kali sticks and the kris dagger. Kali is a fluid, graceful style that belies the controlled power inherent in this martial arts form. A lucky draw game provided a hilarious opportunity for people to win prizes during the night. Four players were randomly chosen, and the game involved placing the facial attributes of a pig onto a blank mask. The catch was that the mask had to be worn over the players' faces, and the players had to place the eyes, nose and mouth on the mask through touch and guess. Everybody won something, but the winner got to choose her pick of the prizes. Another karaoke performance was set up, and several brave souls actually tried their hand (or rather voice) at singing. Some did an admirable job and a good time was had by all. A second game, this one involving finding the sign of the Pig among a group of closed packages containing the other animal signs, was played with some amount of nervous enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the three players certainly were good sports about it. The final two events were a wondrous way to closing the evening. An auction of two hand-made oriental lamps, and an illustrated umbrella enabled two people to come away from this year's New Year celebration with reminders of this night. Finally, a karaoke was held for those who remained, determined to get the most out of this night. It was, without a doubt, a well planned and thoroughly enjoyable way to spend a Saturday night.

## A Play(ful) Look At The Business Of Filmmaking

by Jethelo E. Cabilete

Have you ever wondered about what it would be like to run a film studio? Well, Stage Left provided a small glimpse into the scheming and cut-throat world of business film-making, in their performance of *Speed The Plow*. Written by David Mamet, the play details the lives of two fellow businessmen, Bobby Gould and Charlie Fox, and the introduction of a temporary secretary, Karen, into the midst of an important film-making deal. From the start, it can be seen that this play is a sort of dramatic comedy. Director, Paula Dawson came up with some innovative ideas in the direction of *Speed The Plow*. The painters in the original script are merely stage hands who help set up the stage for the performances. However, in the Stage Left performance (February 1 - 4) Ms. Dawson placed them in the play, making them part of the scenes and in some sense, part of the storyline. Also, the cast created a wonderful ending to the play, when the three main characters took their bows and proceeded to sit in the office of the studio and "watch" a film.

The play itself tells the story of Bobby and Charlie, as they set out to close the deal on a script that they are currently trying to put through. Enter Karen, a temporary secretary who catches Bobby's eye. A quick bet with Charlie, and Karen finds herself at Bobby's apartment discussing a book that she reviewed; a book that may have been considered for script proposal, but Bobby refuses to deal with it. Until Karen tries to convince him of the book's worth. The next time Charlie and Bobby meet, the two argue about the script proposal; Charlie for the original script, and Bobby for the book proposal. A confrontation with Karen ends in the truth being revealed, and Bobby realizing that he almost fell for one of the oldest tricks in the game of corporate business.

This play is not a long, drawn out piece; it remains quick and fresh throughout the entire production. Timing is the key, and the performers maintained a sense of rhythm and time-flow without making the play seem rushed. The scenes between Bobby (Jon Jurmain) and Charlie (Bernie Henry) are a riot, a fast-paced collage of snappy repartee and witty verbalism. Jon Jurmain is perfect as Bobby; from the roughshod treatment of Charlie, his ability to fast-talk without tripping over his words and brash mannerisms. Mr. Jurmain conveys a sense of harried responsibility with style and finesse. His partner in crime, Bernie Henry is the opposite of Mr. Jurmain's character. Charlie is played beautifully as a sort of hyperactive bunch of nerves, ready to explode into action at any time. Mr. Henry portrays a man who is about to see his dreams become reality, and with manic efficiency, with incredible alacrity and credibility. The femme fatale in this mix, is Karen (Rachel Jones). At first glance, Ms. Jones' character lacks depth and character, through David Mamet's writing. Mamet seems to have placed a bit of misogyny in this play, since the character of Karen appears to be forgotten in the background in the first few scenes. However, Karen comes somewhat alive in subsequent scenes, when Ms. Jones shows her versatility in changing from mousy wallflower to active socialite. She displays amazing conviction and passion in the scenes with Mr. Jurmain. All three performers gave exceptional depth and a degree of believability in their respective characters. This was thoroughly enjoyable, and professionally done performance. Hats off to the cast and crew of Stage Left, for a job well done.

## Of Horns, Virgins, Princely Lust And The Battle Between The Sexes.

by Julian Dewar

Wednesday evening, I had the distinct pleasure of viewing two student plays. From their posters, which can be seen around the university, these performances are not for the easily kerfuffled. In fact, one of the plays had been labeled as "not suitable for children". The first production, entitled *Slam the Door Softly*, was a provocative commentary on husband-wife relationships in the '90's. Written by Clare Booth Luce, and directed by Shantell Powell, the main body of the play, is a relationship-ending fight between a wife (Elizabeth Pead) and her husband (Derek Winchester). Ms. Pead delivers her lines with great volume and bravado, as one person commented, "she's the ultimate feminazi!" Her opposite in the battle between the sexes, is Mr. Winchester, whose wonderful projections of his baritone vocality and feelings, seem to echo the masculine call to arms against this "threat" to their...well...masculinity. Packed with loaded comments, and witty verbalisms, *Slam the Door Softly* is full of commentaries on the evolution of feminist thought, while maintaining a humorous and satirical edge. I highly recommend it.

After intermission, the second play, written by Shantell Powell and directed by Terry Thompson, began. Called *The Virgin and the Horn*, this piece was a spoof of many factors in our current society; from a jibe at Shakespeare, a spoof of the political correctness movement, and even of the play itself! The plot behind this modern day fairy tale, features the hilarious attempts of The Prince (Andrew Keilly) at bedding The Virgin (Lynn Reicher). Meanwhile, the farcical Unicorn (Jody McCormack) literally and figuratively sticks his horn in some pretty funny places! Mr. Keilly provides some interesting dualities in his role as The Prince. For most of the play, his ridiculous, and occasionally ribald, attempts to seduce The Virgin are a mastery of farce and a touch of vaudeville. Yet, when the play briefly becomes serious, so too does Mr. Keilly's demeanour; an actor who truly loses himself in his character. Ms. Reicher's portrayal of The Virgin, is the height of satirical poking at, society. Her Barbie-doll mannerisms, vapid expressions and airhead qualities are done with excellent timing and finesse. The contrasting personality changes from demure, though empty-headed, virgin, to hot-blooded seductress, to woman of the '90's and back to being empty-headed, would shame the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers. Ms. Reicher has certainly put some effort into this role. Last, but by no means least, Mr. McCormack gives the right amount of innocence, with a touch of wickedness, to his role as the Unicorn. When he assumes his rightful role as the director, the frustration and sarcasm positively ooze from him. Mr. McCormack delivers just enough pathos and sympathy, without making him seem terribly whiny, or angst-ridden. His delivery is comical in and of itself.

Both *Slam the Door Softly*, and *The Virgin and the Horn* can be seen as a look at the current state of the world, and what some of the things people do in the name of certain beliefs and attitudes. The plays can be seen in Marchal D'Avray Hall, in the theatre from February 9th to the 11th, at 8:00 p.m. Cost is \$3.00 for students and \$5.00 for non-students. Be sure not to miss it, it's comical.