

# drama

## Professor abducted! Satan prime suspect

by Glenn Walton

Who is Doctor Faustus, and what business has he consorting with the devil on our premises, and under King's College Chapel at that?

For the past few weeks the Dal Drama Society has, under the relaxed direction of Ron Huebert, been rehearsing Christopher Marlowe's play **Doctor Faustus**, a work first performed in Elizabethan England and still enjoying regular production the world over. Everyone has heard of Faustus, and many have read one or the other of the many plays and tracts bearing his name. Faustian dramas and fragments make up a considerable body of literature, the two most well-known versions being Marlow's and Faust I & II by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Who was this enigmatic Faustus, cause of so much furious literary activity throughout the centuries, and on the part of such divergent writers?

The original Johannes Faust, a thoroughly disreputable character, lived during the early 1500's in Germany and, so goes the legend, practiced magic, eventually dying at the hands of the devil. The story of the man who sold his soul to Satan apparently appealed to writers' imaginations, for a whole wealth of anecdote and legend grew up around him. Marlowe probably knew and used the original German Faust Book in its English translation; Dante and Milton used the theme, and Goethe picked it up from, among other things, a touring English puppet theatre. In our century Thomas Mann wrote a novel on it, and even Orson Welles has produced his own version on the stage. What makes this story so perennially popular, and what has it to say to an era of space-travel, materialism, and television?

Well, for one, it's about the pursuit of power, pleasure, and riches, dominant themes of any age. Ron Huebert's approach has been to treat the play not as classical theatre but as relevant social comment, juxtaposing the often difficult text, full of mythological and mystical references, upon a contemporary stage and production. It will be done in modern dress and make use of contemporary folk music.

Jean-Pierre Camus' set is designed to highlight the conflicting states of Faustus' mind and, ultimately, his isolation. All is not metaphysical expostulation, however, for the audience of Marlowe's day loved a show: there are devils and angels about, popes and clowns, blackguards and conjurers; a preening chorus line of Seven Deadly Sins marches onstage to tempt Faustus with Lechery, Gluttony, and the like. Even Helen of Troy manages to get in on the fun.

Despite the circus trappings, however, the production has a sobering message. Faustus is a man who deserts traditional scholarship, and

the dissection and abstraction so common among educators and thinkers, and turns to magic, with which he attempts to grasp the totality of existence. In the process, he is waylaid by excessive pride and extreme subjectivity, by over-indulgence in the sensual life. Marlowe has been accused of exalting Faustus in his rejection of traditional teachings. Conversely, Faustus' tragic demise, brought on by his defiance of God's power, has been compared in tone to the Morality Plays of the late Middle Ages, which preached the Christian mystery by use of allegorical figures. Whatever the message, the person of Faustus, torn between the lower and higher spheres, raises provocative questions, ones that have occupied the minds of men for centuries. The production at King's Theatre, starting Friday, November 17th, offers the opportunity to hear those questions being aired once again, and perhaps will aid in answering some of them.



Faustus looks on as Lechery and Pride appear in the Dal Drama Society production Doctor Faustus

## Quebecois drama

by Danièle J. Gauvin

Michel Tremblay's "Forever Yours Marie-Lou" is a slice of working class life, a poignant chronicle of the progressive destruction of a young woman's hopes and dreams, a glimpse of east-end Montreal during and after the "quiet revolution". In the 40's, Marie-Louise had married a nice city boy to escape the poverty and overcrowding of her rural childhood.

"I didn't know I had to let my husband do with me as he pleased," Marie-Lou laments during the play. The peace and breathing space that she sought never materialized.

Caught in a tiny apartment and terrorized by her husband as well as by her own ignorance, she cannot love her children. It isn't only because they remind her of her subjection to Leopold, or her childhood surrounded by 13 siblings; she simply

doesn't have enough psychological energy left to love. Withdrawn and melancholy, she uses television and religion as her "opiate".

Susan MacKinnon, as Marie-Louise, is excellent. Tormented, reproachful or indifferent, her voice makes up for the static position of her character. There is a nervous undercurrent in her dialogue; she is finally, expressing herself but she knows how futile her effort has become.

Brent Bambury, as Marie-Lou's husband Leopold, uses his voice equally well to convey emotions ranging from bitterness to fondness. Seated at his favourite bar stool throughout the play, Leopold recounts his life bluntly, without self pity. Attached to a machine since the age of 18 and unable to communicate with his wife, he only relaxes when he can obliterate his

world in a drunken fog. He beats his kids, who are only mouths to feed for him.

He abuses Marie-Lou and vents on her the frustration which he must repress at work. He knows that he is cast as a villain by everyone in his family and neighborhood. Marie-Lou has never given him love or encouragement or human warmth; he is too proud of his station as "master" of the house to ask

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# Music

## Bream in form

by Steve Trussoni

Julian Bream proved his virtuosity as both a lutenist and guitarist to a capacity audience at the Cohn last week.

Bream devoted the first half of the performance to Renaissance lute music from France, Germany and England, concentrating on court dances of the period, including the Pavan, Galliard and Allemande.

Bream's lute playing sounded orchestral in the two Fantasies by Robert Johnson (1583-1663) and John Dowland (1563-1626). This was due to his playing 'sul Ponticello' (on the bridge of the instrument) producing a metallic quality, and then moving upward over the fingerboard to produce a 'Flautato,' or flute-like tone.

Bream is noted by guitarists for his unusual fingering. One could well appreciate the difficulty of playing J.S. Bach's Prelude, Fugue and Allegro in E-flat which he transcribed from the lute to the guitar.

Though not a flawless performance, his efforts were all toward 'voice leading,' the juxtaposing of several dynamic levels simultaneously, thereby depicting several moving melodic lines.

In ending with four Etudes by Villa-Lobos and a Bream transcription of Cadiz from the Suite Espagnole for piano by Albeniz, the audience was given an exciting finale. Somehow it seemed that he had just warmed up by the time he had to leave.

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