

Entertainment

I can see Liz Taylor in a caftan

Skeleton has designs on theatre

by Suzanne Lundrigan

Not every kid on the block grows up wanting to be a costume designer. David Skeleton explains, "Actually, I went for an audition with the local theatre company at Trent University. I wanted to work as the director's assistant. They didn't have that kind of position and asked me what else I wanted to do. I pointed to the costume designer and said 'I'd like his job.' and that was where it started."

Skeleton chose costume design for a lot of practical reasons. "A lot of my friends were in Toronto trying to get work as actors." He shakes his head, "It's a carnivorous city." Directing work is almost as hard to get. "So I decided to get some formal training in design and came out here to the M.F.A. program."

As a costume designer, Skeleton has to be sensitive to subtleties. "When I'm designing a costume for a character, I'll read the play, put it down for a while, and then read it again. I'll take out things that are implied in the stage directions and through the action and apply them to the costume."

Currently working on *Alone*, Skeleton explained the nuances considered when designing a costume. "In *Alone* there is a scene where the lead gets mice in her hair. I have to decide how to communicate this

Do I ask her to mime this action or do I put little plastic mice in her hair."

The physical demands on the costume are also considered. "*Alone* uses a lot of contact improvisation. The actors wear dance shoes and there is a great deal of movement. I design the costume keeping that in mind."

Less pragmatic elements are at play. "I'm really trying to give the costumes an airy look, to give them an ephemeral, other-worldly quality." Skeleton shrugs, "I guess we'll see if it works out."

The costume designer works with the director on costuming decisions. "What I really hate is not being able to contribute to the decision process. Sometimes the costume designer becomes a lackey to the director. Some directors know exactly what they want. I prefer the thesis, antithesis, synthesis decision-making process."

Visualization is a large part of Skeleton's job. "I have to be able to show people what I mean. I draw well enough to do that... though drawing is a very pragmatic process form. Sometimes the figures will have one leg that is longer than the other. I work a lot with a light table to correct things like that." A wry smile crosses his face.

A graduate of Trent University. "I have an English degree combined with some-

thing called Cultural Studies. Trent didn't have a Fine Arts program so they mixed the Humanities with the Fine Arts. For example, you would analyze a play from an anthropological point of view. It was a good program."

Skeleton is in the final year of his M.F.A. at the University of Alberta. His thesis: the costuming of the play, *Ten Long Years*.

"We study costume design, lighting, and set design. Some programs offer make-up design. I wish this one did."

Skeleton is Toronto-bound. "It looks like I'll have some writing opportunities there."

His perception of Liz Taylor in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?*: "I can see Liz Taylor in a caftan. A very heavy caftan, very bosomy with a high neck to hide the fat. It can be very sensual. Her hair would be long with some curls. Hair is very important."

Skeleton is not at all intimidated by previously performed works. "The older plays have so much tradition and a lot of overtones to explore."

New works have their benefits. "They are very demanding. Everything isn't all together. Often the writer is there and they are still working out kinks. It makes it exciting."



A David Skeleton special seen in *Ejaculations*

I have to be able to show people what I mean... drawing is a very pragmatic process for me. Sometimes the figures will have one leg that is longer than the other.

Camera focuses on life in the nuclear age



Photographer Del Tredici, creates telling image of life after the bomb.

At Work in the Fields of the Bomb
Latitude 53 Gallery
til February 13

review by Suzanne Lundrigan

Latitude 53's current exhibition *At Work in the Fields of the Bomb* is a must see for nuclear phobes and philes. Photographer Del Tredici takes no stand on the issue; he informs.

A photo documentation which traces the development of the nuclear age, this exhibition is remarkable for its intelligence. The series of black and white photographs are compelling testimony to the harsh reality of life in the atom-splitting eighties.

Juxtaposing an image of General Paul Tibbets, the pilot of the Enola Gay, the plane which dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, with that of a Japanese woman who lost her twelve year old daughter during that holocaust, Tredici captures and distills the issues which have rocked the world during the nuclear debate. The accompanying commentary underlines the irony of the photos. While Tibbets became president of an aviation company, the Japanese woman planted a cherry orchard dedicated to the memory of all those lost in

Hiroshima.

Life and death are not the only issues broached by Tredici. He includes a shot of Howard Morland, the freelance reporter who revealed to the world the inner design of the H-bomb. Morgan was consequently sued by the U.S. government for breach of the secrecy act. He won the suit. All the information that he had gained had been culled from books available to the reading public. The wacky world of nuclear physics.

Hawks nest beside doves at this exhibit. Edward Teller, co-developer of the H-bomb, is a mere three steps away from Karl Ziegler Morgan, a man who is studying the effects of low level radiation.

To Teller falls the dubious mantle of having sold Ronny Reagan on the good, truth, and feasibility of the Star Wars program. He is quoted as saying, "If you release all the radioactivity that all the atomic bombs could produce, it still would not hurt a great fraction of humanity. The worst effects of the war would probably be confined to the countries that are actually attacked." Comforting words.

See this exhibit. It is one of the best to pass through Edmonton this year.

New XTC wax is no lark

Skylarking

XTC

Virgin Records

record review by Scott Gordon

Stale.

I could end the review right there, but I should explain myself, in as few words as possible, of course.

This is a band that is taking itself too seriously, even though they claim to have wit and satire on their side. Unfortunately, they also have that pompous, pandering, old fogey fixture of the music scene producing for them now: Todd Rundgren. He

has managed to mix out any remaining energy and freshness that the band may have had left after too many 'tongue in cheek' records. The last record that really had any bite to it was *XTC Go 2*. After that, they just seemed to die.

Another problem is that the songs all seem to sound alike. This may be because they are all mixed together to one extent or another (Yikes! The dreaded conti-concept album!), or XTC wanted to write a forty minute song, but they just couldn't get it right.