



'Hamlet' light on its heels



By JOHN TIMMINS

The N.D.W.T. Company's quirky production of "Hamlet", although handling many scenes dexterously is not a total success by any means. Geoffery Turnbull in taking a new "austere, essentially verbal approach", has ironically given us most of the action without enough of the poetry. Speeches that are meant to appear heightened and quick, often come across as frantic and sometimes incomprehensible. While same makes this essentially uncut "Hamlet" light on its heels, it often makes mincemeat of the poetry.

In later acts, with moods of intrigue and suspicion dominating

Mr. Turnbull's ideas take root and flourish — as does Tom Carew's Hamlet. However, in Act I, with an unprepared audience not immediately able to adjust to this production's wavelength, the main result is frustration. Mr. Carew seems poor in Act I, only until we see him in later scenes and can witness his excellence, with Hamlet's knife-sharp intelligence glinting. Here, he is extraordinary: agile, dexterous, the complete actor and deceiver, giving Hamlet a laser-beam wit. Mr. Carew remains triumphant in the body of the play up until the final speech, which, as in all his soliloquies, cannot succeed when rushed. Hardee Lineham manages the

difficult feat of serving two masters successfully. His Claudius is both quick enough in delivery to suit this production, yet regal and measured enough to fit Shakespeare, as witness the true splendour of his grief and prayer. This emotional volatility makes his this production's most complete and astounding performance. Peter Elliot benefits from the "speed" requirements of this production, using the demands of heightened delivery to make Polonius grief, metallic and business-like (Mr. Elliot's foppy messenger needs more distinction).

The two vital female roles are not successfully enacted. Neither

Miriam Greene as Gertrude nor Suzanne Turnbull as Ophelia are in tap with wealth of emotional force contained in their roles. Both need more fire in performing: Gertrude's pain in her scenes with her son remains primarily dormant, while Ophelia's mad scenes have more material for a debut at the

Metropolitan than for the needed agony. Similarly Jerry Franken's Horatis is distinctive, but does not capture the character's great emotional depth. As Laertes, David Ferry portrays his familial grief passably, but does not earn such a response in his scenes with either Polonius or Ophelia in Act I. The almost conversational

chattering of his death speech, as well as those of Hamlet and Gertrude is simply unforgivable, whatever the aims of the production. Finally, there is not one thing in Gordon Stobbe's portrayal of Hamlet's Ghost to suggest that he is a ghost, let alone one in agony.

Using untypical costumes is a fine idea, but playing mix and match (Polonius' business suit) is not. The Elizabethan two-level set is nicely bare and convertible for the austerity Mr. Turnbull is after. But on the whole, his interpretation — valid, but only partially so — cuts the person to fit the clothes, and it is, by times, a bloody business.

Valdy and Peter Griffin to appear at Playhouse



Valdy, hailed as "Canada's greatest folk singer" will be in Fredericton on the second of December. He will give two concerts at the Fredericton Playhouse, one at 7:00 p.m., the other at 9:15 p.m. Advanced tickets are \$3.00 and at the door \$3.50. Tickets go on sale November 24th and can be bought at the SRC office and at the Playhouse. A

Fredericton native, Peter Griffin, will be Valdy's special guest star. The Newfoundland native released his first album in the States in September. Valdy has received several good critical reviews: "A musical poet laureat — giant among Canadian story tellers ... He could become a legend in his own time — R.P.M. More than anyone around today Valdy

reflects Canada, his songs gentle, perceptive, sincere," — Ottawa Journal. "An almost tangible magical quality of music, played

simply, honestly and beautifully," — Edmonton Journal. "Without a doubt the best performer in Canada today," — Truro, Nova Scotia News. "Valdy is for real," Toronto Sun.



A large exhibition of new Canadian graphics is hanging in the Art Centre Studio. Graphex 3 is a juried show organized annually by the Art Gallery of Brant. Printmakers from Newfoundland to British Columbia have entered lithographs, etchings, silkscreens, drawings and numerous other media. Since its opening in Brantford in April the exhibition has been touring. It comes to the UNB Art Centre from Calgary and goes next to Montreal. Fredericton is the only centre showing it in New Brunswick.

A second group exhibition is in the Art Centre Gallery. The Limmers are nine British Columbia artists, six of whom are represented in this show of 57 works — paintings, drawings and sculpture. The exhibition was organized and circulated to Atlantic galleries by Confederation Centre of Charlotte-

town. The work varies from the precisely realized portraits of Myfanwy Pavelic, and the photo collages of Robin Skelton, through the primitivism of Maxwell Bates to the semi-abstract figures of Karl Spreitz and Herbert Siebner. The three wood sculptures of Robert de Castro are non-objective.

Both these exhibition will continue until November 26th, and may be seen in the Art Centre Monday to Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 2-5 p.m.

A third exhibition is Pottery by the Keswick Ridge Craftsmen. Bill Norman and Allan Crimmons recently moved their studio from Keswick Ridge to the Opus Craft Village at Mactaquac where they have even more visitors than on the Ridge. These examples of their recent work can be seen in the Art Centre Display Case until November 30th.

J. L. Hooker plays to blues lovers

By ALEX VARTY

Last Saturday's John Lee Hooker concert may not have been all that the Hooker's fans had hoped for, but it did lay to rest the delusion that blues does not have a major audience in River City. The packed house was quite demonstrative in its appreciation of both Hooker's and supporting act Michael Polacco's performances. Hopefully Hooker's success will encourage local bookers to present more blues and jazz artists.

Michael Polacco was perhaps an unfortunate opening act for a "boozy" crowd — his jazz-tinged folk style was polished and well-rehearsed, but seemed a bit too "commercial" for the event. Polacco's unusual guitar style was impressive, even though he blew a few runs, and his pianist and percussionist were talented and enthusiastic. I found Polacco's interpretations of other writer's material to be a bit bombastic for my taste, and it's obvious that he owes quite a bit to Ritchie Haven's inspiration, but his performance seemed to go over surprisingly well.

Hooker's band followed with some revampings of classic blues songs. Faulty equipment plagued their set, and I got the impression that the band was not very well-rehearsed. Hooker's longtime guitarist Luther Tucker displayed some tasteful licks, but the rhythm section was content to keep time, while the second guitarist was over-amplified and under-imaginative.

After several tunes, a rather inebriated Hooker ambled on stage sat down and picked up his red Epyshone.

His first two numbers were rather disorganized, partly because of the band's apparent inability to keep their volume down and partly because he was still gaging the mood of the crowd.

After a slow start things clicked, as Hooker ran through several good boogies and the dramatic, diabolical "Yike Jesse James," a slow blues. I was surprised to hear Hooker sounding so much like a Mississippi Delta-bluesman — his guitar style is even rawer live than on record. His band was insensitive to the subtleties of the Delta approach, and stumbled rather than slid through some of the songs. Hooker's showmanship and voice covered though, and most of the audience left satisfied.

I enjoyed myself at the concert, but some of the sloppiness evident on the part of the Hooker band and on the part of the sound-and-lighting people seemed out of place in what was a fairly expensive concert for Fredericton.

I hope that more attention to mixing, lights and proper miking of amplifiers is practised at the next concert; — these "little details" can seriously detract from the enjoyment of a concert if not attended to. The Playhouse has the necessary equipment available for good lights, good miking, and good mixing, and concert promoters should always have good people to staff the facilities in order to give the public its money's worth.