

*The Collaborators ...*

# Confusion a good thing

If you're a person who likes to pop plays into pigeon-holes, don't go and see Walterdale Theatre's latest production, John Mortimer's *The Collaborators*. It will only confuse you.

Usually when you walk into a community theatre production of something lightly cast into the English-dry-wit, pun-permeated, situational-comedy mold - it's as straightforward and as simple as that. Just another bit of fluff to amuse the crowds coming to the show after a hard day's work.

Not so with *The Collaborators*. It is certainly a very funny play but it is not just another "bit of fluff." It is an amusing and a serious look at a stagnating marriage relationship - well enough acted and directed that I rate it as one of the best productions I have seen in non-professional theatre (and beats a few of the professional theatre efforts I've seen in the last year in Edmon-

ton).

It is the twinning of a comic and a serious tone in the play that produces such an interesting, at times very refreshing, effect. On the one hand Henry Winter (William Thorsell) offers lots of punny remarks or witty understatements to make the audience laugh. On the other hand, his wife Katherine (Midge Wallace) seems seriously depressed by an all-too-depressing and confining marriage and pulls an "innocent" by-stander, Sam Brown (Bob Miller) into conflict with Henry - to make the audience sit up and think seriously.

Henry makes amusing comments about the children, but the comments also reflect a serious dissatisfaction on his part; this situation prompts yet another confrontation with Katherine. Sam is a young, aggressive, panting, sweating movie producer who comes on with a stylized comedy routine.

The audience titters at his blunderings. But when the audience discovers that Sam's blunders have been used by the Winters only "to bring a little excitement into their lives" - we can actually feel a twinge or two of sympathy for him.

I say this as if it is all clear-cut and this is the response of most of the audience registered, but it was not like that at all. The play ends quite abruptly, leaving the audience confused and wondering what the playwright's intent is.

Some people are immediately turned off by the obvious fact that dramatist Mortimer has not painted the marriage relationship in rosy colours. Others feel the general tone of the play is comic and the serious positions are only included to heighten the incongruity of the comic moments. Yet others question how much of the play is serious and how much, comic - and don't find the answer.

But that fact alone makes the play worth seeing. Any play which can elicit such varied response must surely rank as something of a rarity. Add to that the fact that the acting and directing were of top quality, and the show becomes very attractive.

That is not to say it is flawless. The play is a very long one (2½ hours) and tends to drag at certain points, though still sustained by its level of humour. Transition between scenes and various speeches within individual scenes is often neglected and tends to jar the flow. Some technical problems with lighting also disturb the flow (though not badly) and the acting from Joan Milroy, who plays the minor role of Griselda Griffin, is not very good (although adequate). Bob Miller doesn't do Sam Brown as well as it could or should be done, but is generally carried by the outstanding lead performances from Bill Thorsell and Midge Wallace.

After a four year absence, Director Frank Glenfield has returned with a flair and an eye for good drama. His pacing and insistence on rapid dialogue and rapid scene changes kept the time of the play reasonable.

It runs through to March 20 at the Walterdale Playhouse, 10322-83 Avenue.

*Kevin Gillese*



## A musical message

*Photo and Story by Keith Miller*

Last Tuesday at the Edmonton Inn, Larry Norman brought his own very personal brand of music to Edmonton audiences. He is one of the people who very early on became involved in what is called Jesus Rock, releasing his first album in 1967.

Seemingly trite at times because they are somewhat "dated," his lyrics are often cynically humorous, but they get the point across. His beliefs about the temporary nature of rock'n'roll as a political force are echoed in his lyrics: "The Beatles sang about love / and then they broke up."

More significantly, he sings about the failure of politics in meeting the people and dealing with their needs. He is a Christian's Dylan, but unlike Dylan, he goes further than just describing the problems. Larry Norman has answer: Jesus, because he believes that Jesus is more than something political.

He offered the crux of the matter thus: "Some people think that He was a politician Who spoke of being free And was followed by the masses"

## First Outing for MacEwan Students

The Performing and Design Arts department of Grant MacEwan College will be presenting their first major concert performance of music, song, and dance, Mar. 16 at 8 pmat SUB theatre.

The production *Class of '76* will feature many of the students' own compositions and arrangements.

Tickets are \$3 for adults and \$2 for students and are available from the receptionist at each college campus, SU Box Office, or at the door.

on the shores of Galilee. He spoke out against destruction And He bowed to no decree So they nailed Him to a tree. Some people think he was the Son of God A man above all men, But He came to be a servant To set us free from sin And that is who I believe He is."

Norman is in the middle of a western Canadian tour that includes Calgary, Regina, Saskatoon and Vancouver. Appearing with him were Chuck and Rhonda, a down-to-earth duo singing in a gospel-folk style.

## Mellor on the mundane military

*by Frank N. Stein*

Mellor, *John Forgotten Heroes* Methuen 1975, 163 pp. \$10.95.

On August 19, 1942, the Canadian Second Division (with scattered auxiliary British and American forces) massed a frontal assault on the heavily - defended French coastal port of Dieppe. Of the 4963 Canadian soldiers that took part, 3367 were killed, wounded or captured.

This is their story. A definitive history of the raid - who and what prompted it, who fought in it and how, what the end result was. But when I say definitive, I mean it.

Mellor devotes a full sixty-five pages to the individual actions during the raid - even though the raid took only nine hours! It is tough going for any but the most avid military historian, as it relates the different skirmishes (and/or slaughters) of the scattered commando, infantry and tank force which took part in the raid.

But Mellor also includes an interesting ending to the work, by following some of the prisoners into the "Dieppe Compound" (Stalag VIII B) and examining their lives as prisoners of war and determined escape planners. This is especially important because of the number of Canadian prisoners the Germans took

after the disastrous attack.

On the whole, however, I found the book to be quite boring after the first thirty or forty pages. But I'm no military historian, in any case, and I think the book is generally well written and obviously

meticulously researched.

As such, it is a good thing to have in a historical library or with the other shelves of Canadiana, to join the memories of Paschendale and Vimy Ridge as the moments of military glory in Canada's past.

## Kearney comes to Hovel

Folk-rock performer Christopher Kearney, a Gordon Lightfoot "discovery" will be onstage at the Hovel this weekend, from Mar 12 - 14.

The Toronto-born travelling minstrel began his serious musical career in San Francisco at the peak of the west coast surfing sound. His career has taken him up and down the west and east coast for college and club dates at places like Montreal's Golem Coffeehouse and New York's Bitter End. In 1972 Kearney was the Canadian representative at the Inter-

national Song Festival in Rio de Janeiro.

Gordon Lightfoot's friendship and encouragement led the way to Kearney's first single, which has since resulted in the release of three Capitol albums. Both *Christopher Kearney* and *Pemmican Stash* have received excellent reviews. His newest album is *Sweetwater*, on the same label.

Kearney will be accompanied by guitarist Rick Whitelaw. Door time is 8:30, members \$2 and non-members \$3.

In Concert  
**DAN HILL**  
Friday, March 19  
8:00 p.m.  
SUB THEATRE  
TICKETS \$4/\$5 at SU Box Office/Mikes  
A Students' Union presentation

**Ernie's STEAK PIT LTD**  
For Elegant Dining  
Licensed Lounge  
Open 'til Midnight  
FREE PARKING  
reservations: 469-7149  
40 Bonnie Doon Shopping Centre

**MIKE SEEGER AND THE COUNTRY MUSIC CARAVAN INCLUDING**

**LONNIE YOUNG & SONS** from Como, Mississippi  
- Afro-American cane lute and drum music.

**LILY MAY LEDFORD** from Lexington, Kentucky  
- with MIKE SEEGER  
- traditional string band music.

**JOHN JACKSON** from Virginia  
- Afro-American blues and ballads, hillbilly, contemporary country.

**BALFA BROTHERS**  
- with MARC SAVOY from Louisiana  
- Cajun traditional  
Project Director - JOHN S. ULLMAN

**THURSDAY, APRIL 1 at 8:00 P.M.**  
SUB Theatre  
TICKETS: \$5.00 ea. Mike's Ticket Office/S.U. Box Office/and at the door.