

arts



PHOTO: RICHARD UNDERHILL

A member of the Willem Breuker Kollektief, the free-spirited comedy/big band from Holland who made it to Larry's Hideaway last Thursday.

Breuker Kollektief blitzes smoke-filled night club

By RICHARD UNDERHILL

Larry's Hideaway has always had a flair for the bizarre. It's a subterranean, smoke-filled room with a clientele that often resembles escapees from the Queen Street Mental Health Centre. Rarely has a band reflected this atmosphere as well as the Willem Breuker Kollektief which blitzed the club last Thursday night.

Although the name suggests rake-toting members of an experimental German farming commune, the Willem Breuker Kollektief is anything but a staid, agrarian collection of individuals. On the contrary, the Dutch band seems to be suffering from an advanced case of musical schizophrenia as well as an extremely well developed flair for musical parody. Encouraging this crazy group is like giving a madman access to a nuclear weapon, and the results are similar. No one is safe when the explosion hits.

Thursday's concert exploded with a sardonic overture, the nine-member band parodying pompous march music by continually shifting the rhythmic grid of the tune, giving it an unbalanced feel. From this pseudo-Gilbert and Sullivan idea the Kollektief jumped into a driving big band shuffle that featured a raucous solo from leader, Willem Breuker, on tenor sax. Breuker unleashed a flood of grunts, squawks and groans, hardly and discernible notes spilling out of the end of his horn. Such



an expressive, energetic outburst pleased the crowd and was effective in contrasting the structured nature of the overture.

Romping its way through several styles of music, from funk to swing, tangos to marches, the band, featuring the three saxes, three brass and a rhythm section, presented a show that was both visually and musically exciting. As one musical idea became tiresome, the group would jump in with a free jazz solo reminiscent of Ornette Coleman, or a complete change in musical texture, alleviating the tension of the repetitious, over-arranged nature of much of the music. At one point, pianist Henk de Jonge interrupted a mysterious spy theme shuffle with a frantic free jazz solo,

which he in turn cut into with quotes from the Minute Waltz and Tchaikovsky's 1st piano concerto.

Equally effective in breaking up the performance (and the audience) was Willem Breuker's attempted vocal act after a tiresome amount of orchestral riffing by the band. Grabbing a free mike, Breuker crooned a corny ballad that eventually worked its way into a hard-driving blues shuffle, as members of the horn section dipped and rolled in a choreographed ease. As saxophonist Andre Goudbeek honked a dirty solo, Breuker weaved through the howling audience, confidently shaking hands like an aging star of the Holiday Inn circuit.

Such silly parody and musical fiddling, as well as an overabundance of prearranged music was at first disconcerting to the serious jazz fan. However, as the evening progressed, it was difficult not to be infected by the inherent merry atmosphere of the band, which glossed over the contrived nature of much of the show.

The comic highlight of the evening found Willem Breuker playing an alto solo. Unable to find the tonic of the key, he just couldn't seem to finish, no matter how hard he tried. The agony and frustration of both Breuker and the audience was finally relieved as fellow sax player Maarten van Norden crept up from behind and grabbed the keys of his horn, finishing the lick. Not to be outdone, Breuker picked up a soprano sax and jammed it into his mouth, playing it with his free hands. The spectacle was completed as another saxophone and assistant joined Breuker in a bizarre four-sax, two-mouth rendition of Sentimental Journey.

This was Breuker's first Toronto appearance. What began as a quartet on the streets of Amsterdam in 1974 has blossomed into a wild group dedicated to musical pandemonium. Their stage presence and musical demeanor has at once the appearance of a Dutch Oktoberfest oom-pah group drugged beyond the point of human endurance, and at second glance, the power of a hard driving blues band that paid its dues on the street. Describing the band's *raison d'être* and appeal, long time member Henk de Jonge said, "Everyone's happy when we play. You can laugh and cry at the same time."

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In the "Jazz double bill of the Century," the unenviable task of following the Willem Breuker Kollektief fell upon Steve Lacy who, earlier last week, performed a work for Trio at York. Lacy handled the Larry's assignment well, playing a short, intense set with a fine quartet that featured near atonal soloing over blues and afro-feel tunes. Lacy once again demonstrated his mastery of the soprano saxophone, and altoist Steve Potts played well also.

Those interested in getting a different opinion on how to play the saxophone should not miss the dynamic World Saxophone Quartet who will be at Larry's Thursday November 10. An improvising group that plays without a rhythm section, the World Sax Quartet freely explores areas of jazz and improvised music. Not to be missed.

Godard's Passion mature, refreshing, but lacks hard edge

By ADRIAN IWACHIW

Jean-Luc Godard has always been one of the more "difficult" of European filmmakers. Since he first burst on the French New Wave with *Breathless* in 1960, Godard has established himself as a politically radical and technically revolutionary director.

Godard's 1982 film *Passion* which opens tomorrow at the Fine Arts (Yonge and Eglinton) does not cover any new ground, but reveals a maturity gained in 25 years of filmmaking.

Godard's most famous works date from the early to late 1960s, films like *Une Femme Mariee*, *Alphaville*, *Pierrot le Fou* and the iconoclastic and grandiose *Weekend*. After France's politically volatile summer of 1968, Godard went underground. Refusing to make films as he had before, he instead opted to engage in a thoughtful and analytic theoretical dialogue with a small revolutionary audience. These "Dziga-Vertov Group" experiments which culminated in a couple of more commercial film collaborations with Jean-Pierre Godin. By 1973, however, Godard left Paris to establish the Sonimage production company with Anne-Marie Mieville. During this period his emphasis changed from the Maoist outlook of the "Dziga-Vertov" period to a more general analysis of the factors that influence our subjectivity—the family, the social and economic environment, the relationship between sound and image, and image and reality.

Everything in the film then, takes place in the space between—"between the probable and the possible" (in Godard's words), and between the screen and its interpretation.

Passion demands an effort from the audience. The disjointed narrative, the casually-abrupt stops and starts of music, the frequent use of non-synchronized sound all

serve to dislocate the viewer. In fact, four cinematographers apparently felt that the effort expected of them ("to look with their own eyes and not to expect me to tell them everything") was too much.

It would be easy to criticize Godard for a certain complacency—obviously a lot of money went into producing *Passion*, and the result is hardly the harsh indictment of consumer society that he would have produced some fifteen years ago. Nor is it easy-to-follow exposition.

"Video is like making love and the film is the fetus—there is always the risk of miscarriage."

—Jean-Luc Godard

But Godard has left behind his revolutionary "correctness" in favor of a balanced and healthy ambivalence, playing different elements against each other—in politics, sexuality, technology, the economic determinants of our lives, and the impassioned struggle to relate work and love in a non-alienating unity. *Passion* lacks a hard edge and is by no means a resounding success, but it is a refreshing and often humorous film from a mature director, who shows himself to be as sincerely concerned about the world as ever.

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On Saturday, Harbourfront's Video Culture Festival will premiere Godard's videotape *Scenario du Film Passion*, which is a kind of video exploration of the sound-image possibilities of *Passion*, reflecting the tension between reality and the film's central "trinity" of Love, Work and the Cinema.

Celestina is bawdy and poetic

By MICHELLE AUNG THIN

Bawdy dialogue, poetic expulsion, and a 15th century concept of social stratification mark next week's Toronto premier of *Celestina* in Burton Auditorium. *Celestina* is the work of Spanish writer Fernando De Rojas, a Jew turned Catholic under the "gentle" persuasion of the Spanish Inquisition. The play centers on Celestina, a scheming brothel madam and the characters she ensnares.

The play's director, Louis Di Bianco, is a member of York's theatre faculty. Di Bianco began his theatrical career 16 years ago in New York. He has worked at Ottawa's National Arts Centre, Tarragon Theatre in Toronto, Montreal's Centour Theatre as well as appearances on television and in film.

The show's set and costume designer, E.K. Ayotte, is a professional employee of the York University theatre department. His credits

include work for Young People's Theatre, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, and Vanier College. Robert Bosworth-Morrison, a York graduate, designed the show's lighting.

Celestina originally consisted of an anonymously-written act, which was found by De Rojas and expanded. Since the play was intended to be read rather than performed, a great deal of work has gone into its preparation for the stage. It has been adapted by Joseph Cazalet from a new translation by Margaret Stocker.

Celestina presents the three traditional class levels against the religious-political atmosphere of 15th century Spain. It is often said that adversity is the best spur for wit.

Celestina previews November 7 at 7 p.m. and runs to November 12. The run ends with a 2 p.m. show. Tickets are \$1 for York students, \$2 for others, and are on sale at the bookstore.

Richard Pryor Fans!

Hello and welcome to another popular *Excalibur* contest. *X-cal* in cooperation with Columbia Pictures and WEA Records presents the Did-you-know-about-Richard-Pryor contest.

The first 10 people to come to *Excalibur*, 111 Central Square and answer these trivial and inane questions about Dick win both a Richard Pryor poster and the soundtrack from his latest film, *Here and Now*.

Peoria, Illinois is:

- Richard Pryor's birthplace
- The world's largest exporter of cocaine.
- A fun place to grow up.

Richard Pryor is:

- 33-years old
- a guy who grew up in a fun place
- Washed up



PHOTO: RICHARD UNDERHILL

Gallery exhibit by Scott Chile comes out in the open in Winters Courtyard.