

Rebels and Cassel play with insanity

interview by Mike Spindloe

David Cassel may not look like a rebel, even a nebulous one, but the artistic director of Edmonton's longest-running non-mainstream theatre is a firm believer in the kind of do-it-yourself philosophy that has kept the Nebulous Rebels on stage while other "fringe" companies have bitten the dust.

The Rebels' current production, *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean*

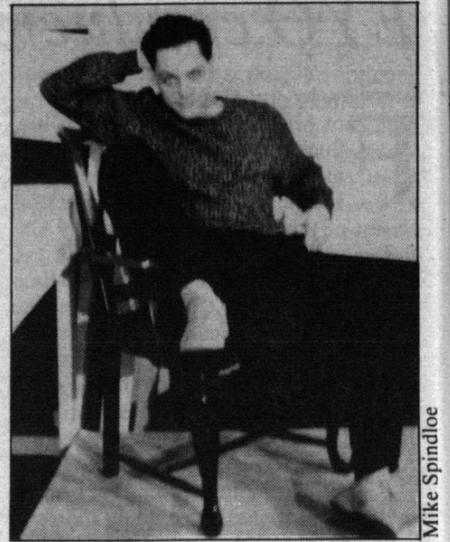
Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade, takes place in an asylum in the early 19th century. This doesn't mean that the inmates are crazy. Rather, as Cassel points out, "at that time asylums weren't just for the insane. People that society couldn't cope with ended up there as well." This was apparently the fate of the Marquis de Sade, who was incarcerated "because of

his active imagination, which was considered twisted," rather than mere insanity.

Cassel agrees that perhaps that situation hasn't changed too much, and this is one of the things that makes the play's themes timeless. "The play deals a lot with themes of rulers, and with what kind of people incite revolutions and lead governments. It seems that throughout eternity the poor always eventually rise up and revolt, but then they become the ruling class and the seeds of another revolution are sown."

The contrast between the philosophies of the Marquis de Sade and the revolutionary rhetoric of Jean Paul Marat provide the intellectual premise of the play, usually known conveniently as *Marat/Sade*, but Cassel promises an interesting visual spectacle as well. "The set is the bath-house of the asylum, from the inmate's perspective." As well, to publicize and preview the play, the Rebels hosted "An Evening in Bondage" last week.

Marat/Sade was written in 1963 by Peter Weiss, based on Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty". The play has an interesting history, having had a total of four different endings used in various early productions in Europe and on Broadway.



David Cassel, artistic director of the Nebulous Rebels, on the set of their season opener, *Marat/Sade*.

Third Theatre technique the Rebels use. Using this system, "the actor is the theatre. Every actor is involved in all aspects of the theatrical process, from designing and building the set to selling tickets and contributing to the direction." The members of the company come from "every walk of life" as well; some are professional theatre people, while others are students or people with "real" jobs.

Cassel himself has been involved with the Nebulous Rebels since their official inception as a company in Calgary in 1984. Of the original dozen people who were involved, only Cassel and Michael Charois remain. Before their incorporation, the Rebels performed as an ad hoc group at the 1983 Fringe festival in Edmonton.

Cassel's history in theatre goes back to high school, when an accident with a car (he was "run over") ended a potential career in dance. In acting he found "a discipline similar to that of skating, which includes dance, voice, script and structure." Still in grade 11, he started a clown show which became so successful it turned into a full-time job. He later underwent both mime and classical theatre training.

For Cassel, acting is an integration of the physicality of mime and the intellectual prowess of text; the physical juxtaposed against the philosophical. "As both the director of and an actor in *Marat/Sade*, Cassel has the opportunity to explore this juxtaposition to the fullest.

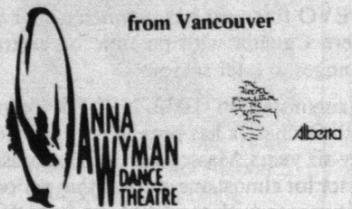
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Thanks to the Rebels, there are now five: "We looked at the best aspects of the four endings that already existed and developed our own from that."

The show is also the Rebels most ambitious production to date, boasting a live band which will perform "a constant integral soundscape rather than a soundtrack." There is also a cast of 25, the largest in their history. Cassel was initially unsure of his ability to direct such a large cast: "I thought that I would find out all the problems inherent in doing a production of that size, but it's been nothing but a joy."

Perhaps it has something to do with the

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LiveLine entertainment service

by Jo Ann Hill

Have you ever been in a situation where you can't decide what to do or where to go for a good time? There is now a solution to this problem and it's called LiveLine.

LiveLine is a computer-generated listing of entertainment events going on in the city. This listing includes University cultural activities, Citadel programs, the Symphony, lounges, and festivals. There are already about 4500 items listed but that is, "too much data for the computer to handle right now," said John Compston, one of the LiveLine coordinators.

The organization hopes to get funding from the city, which would provide them with the ability to re-program and increase the listing to about 7000 items.

If they get the funding, the LiveLine organization would like to expand to hotels and tourist booths. "Visitors to the city would be able to find out what was

going on in the city and where," said Cora Molstad, president of the board of LiveLine, adding, "we are already receiving calls from outside the province, even outside Canada." Compston went further by stating, "we are the only live service in Canada. People are quite surprised when they call up and we aren't a tape."

Mrs. Molstad noted, "the city should fund it because it is a service to the city."

The organization already provides radio stations and newspapers with information.

The LiveLine society has no funding as of yet and is being run by volunteers. With funding they hope to buy more computers and also employ more operators. More operators would allow them to open on weekends and stay open later on weekdays. As it stands, they are open 9 to 4 on weekdays.

So the next time you can't decide what to do for a good time, call LiveLine at 424-LIVE (424-5483) for an up-to-date listing of entertainment activities.

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Attention: Mike Spindloe