

# Video technology cannot save the last confused man on Earth

By WENDY QUINTON

Trying to construct a sense of logic from *Last Man on Earth* is out of the question. Conceived, written and performed by Alan Bridle, *The Last Man on Earth*, is a VideoCabaret International Production at the Factory Theatre until November 16.

The play is a bizarre culmination of video personnas in a world where conventionality is non-existent. VideoCabaret International, a group which experiments with video and theatre, is well known for its original scripts, new technological ideas, and "imaginative cultural politics." Bridle has captured these objectives in a very bizarre form.

Twelve video screens present various characters, all played by Bridle. The screens are assembled in a pyramid and are entwined with sorrid pieces of muted grey cloth resembling the remains of a nuclear holocaust. Yet the set, with its 12 screens offering potentially variety, quickly leaves the viewer with a false sense of excitement. Bridle, playing Adair, "the last man on earth," never manages to evoke sympathy from the



**READY FOR TAKE-OFF:** Alan Bridle is the sole survivor in a video hell.

audience. Instead, at most, the viewer develops tolerance for him. The play itself never builds enough momentum to fully engage the viewer's interest.

Adair is the audience's only link to

a "real" human being. He involves himself in a pseudo-alliance with Jason, a video ghoul whose blue silhouette invades five of the video screens. Jason is Adair's confidante and tries to discourage him from zapping from the screen, those characters that frustrate and antagonize his very existence.

Yet one never really knows why Adair is so insistent on zapping other characters. Perhaps his rampage is an extension of the previous elimination of those who were part of his life. The video images seem to stir Adair's past memories and evoke his present reality—that of being the "last man on earth." Thus, in a state of frustration, Adair zaps images of his parents, girlfriend, acquaintances, and finally Jason.

In *Last Man on Earth* there is no theme of semblance of order. Most noticeably Bridle's story-line lacks direction. A sense of isolation and loneliness penetrates the audience, but for the most part the play is utterly confusing. It is unfortunate that the play's technical brilliance fall prey to such a weak, underdeveloped script.

# ARTS

## Criminals at large!

By KEN KEOBKE

Is Babe crazy? In *Crimes of the Heart*, she has shot her husband because she "didn't like his looks." In an afternoon of female bonding, we see her and her two eccentric sisters, Meg and Lenny, discussing the crime and exposing their frustrations; Meg over a failed career as a singer in Hollywood and Lenny over a life as a frumpy housewife.

The play, set in Hazelhurst Mississippi, is a rollercoaster of laughter and despair. Written by Beth Henley, it is presently being made into a movie featuring Jessica Lange, Sissy Spacek, Diane Keaton and Sam Shepard. Henley's most recent film credit is as co-author of the David Byrne film *True Stories*.

*Crimes of the Heart* is being performed at York by a group of very motivated undergraduate theatre students doing it in addition to their

full load of course work. The director, Shyam Selvaduri, says "it's a shame not to make use of the resources (such as performance space and willing actors) to put on productions and learn from them." A fourth year student, Selvaduri chose the play after seeing a Toronto production done by the East Side Players. He enjoyed the play but felt he wanted a chance to work with the character whose stupidities are too easily made objects of laughter. "This is a play where the audience should laugh with the characters," he says. "As the play progresses, we see that the characters aren't all that eccentric; their problems come to make sense as we know more about them."

The play is being presented in the Samuel Beckett Theatre in the basement of Stong. It runs November 18th to the 21st at 8 p.m. Tickets, available at the door, are only two dollars.

## York Community Arts Events calendar

Compiled By JENNIFER PARSONS

### MUSIC

Nov. 19: **Alexina Luie—Composer of the Year**, lecture-demonstration of upcoming premiere of her piano concerto. McLaughlin Hall, 12:30 p.m.

Nov. 21: **Student Chamber Concert**, performances given by various student ensembles, McLaughlin Hall, 12 noon.

### THEATRE

Nov. 10-14: **The Merchant of Venice**, a fourth year production directed by Neil Freeman. Atkinson Theatre, 7 p.m., plus Nov. 14 at 2:00 p.m.

Nov. 18-22: **Crimes of the Heart**, directed by Shyam Selvaduri, Samuel Beckett Theatre, 112 Stong College at 8:00 p.m.

Nov. 21: **William Pitman**, head of Ontario Arts Council, will lecture in **Prime Time**, Burton Auditorium, 12:30-2:00 p.m.

### GALLERY SHOWS

Until Nov. 14: **York Work**, sculpture and intermedia artists from from the teaching staff of the faculty of Fine Arts. AGYU, Ross N145.

Until Nov. 18: **Nicole Elliot, Toronto Debut for a Quebec Painter**, Zacks Gallery, 190 SC.

Nov. 10-14: **Renata Aebi: A One Woman Show**, paintings by a recent York grad. IDA 202 FA.

Nov. 10-16: **Recollections**, mixed media by York student Jan Raymond. Founders Gallery, 206 FC.

Nov. 20-Dec. 19: **Jerzy Kolacz: The Mind's Eye**, paintings and drawings by an editorial illustrator for the *Globe* and the *Sun*. Glendon Gallery.

Nov. 20-Dec. 19: **Documentary and Docudrama**, photographs by Peter Barass and Jane Wilson. Winters Gallery, 123 WC.

By STAN KLICH

As the set was being prepared for Radio York's presentation of *The Peoples' Republic of Dave*, *The Rheostatics* and *The Lawn* at the Open End Pub last Friday, a couple of people walked up to the doorperson and one of them hesitantly asked "Not Radio York again?" "Yep," was the reply. The people turned and walked away.

The evening opened with the country/folk sound of *The Peoples' Republic of Dave*. Fronted by Dave Bidini (who also plays and sings for *The Rheostatics*), and backed by Steven Foster and Gord Wilson, the three guitarists served to get the audience going with originals such as "The Great Ontario Beer Strike", "Sad Sad World" and "Long Headed Bass." But the highpoint of *Republic's* performance occurred when musicians from *The Lawn* and *The Rheostatics* (along with one surprise musician from CJRY radio) joined the band to perform a 'let's wing it' version of 'Fulston County Blues' by Johnny Cash.

Occasionally joined by singer Jan Morassutti (who also sang a couple of songs with *The Rheostatics*) Bidini proved to be a great entertainer as well as a competent performer.

The evening continued with *The Rheostatics* who performed an interesting blend of originals that ranged from country ballads to "new wave" songs. The vocals of Tim Vesely and the guitar work of Dave Bidini formed the original sound of the band. Dave Clark, drummer and primary band spokesperson, seemed to express best what *The Rheostatics* were all about. "We just play music because it's a good time and we hope to just keep doing it," he said.

The musicians for *The Peoples' Republic of Dave* and *The Rheostatics* proved to be quite talented, with special mention going out to Dave Clark who sat in for drummer Mike Duggan of *The Lawn* who cancelled at the last minute due to unforeseen complications.

With the good opening performance of *The Peoples' Republic of Dave* and the continuing entertainment provided by *The Rheostatics*,

the evening had been a pretty good time—but the goodtimes were to end with *The Lawn*. Throughout the first two thirds of the evening, The Open End Pub became more crowded and was eventually full, but as *The Lawn* took the stage and played the first two songs of their set it became more than half empty.

*The Lawn* provided nothing in terms of musicianship, unless of course you happen to like a lead singer screaming into a microphone in an attempt to hit a note above his vocal range and subsequently blowing the circuit breaker on the sound system four times in a one-hour performance. That *The Lawn* wasn't playing with their regular drummer provided only a feeble excuse for their poor show.

Backed by the constant buzz of distortion unit operator Patrick Gregory (he was really trying to play rhythm guitar), and accompanied by the never ending slide guitar work of lead singer Gord Cumming, *The Lawn* was a disappointment to what was otherwise a fairly successful evening.

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Our apologies to **hair hair** for the errors that appeared in the November 6th issue of *Excalibur*. It should have read: Ladies (not Unisex) Shampoo, Cut & Blow Dry Now \$14.00 and Mens (not Unisex) Wash, Cut & Blow Dry Now \$7.00.