

# Inexperienced but enthusiastic

Orchesis Dance  
Feb. 12 to 14  
SUB Theatre

by Charlotte Cooper

Orchesis is great if you keep in mind you are viewing a group of enthusiastic U of A students with virtually no background in dance.

The problem starts when you begin to judge the dancers on their execution of the steps. The leaps are not wide enough, the jumps not high enough and because the time is off, people bump into each other.

What comes across is the majority of people in the troupe have little or no background in dance. Consequently they cannot move quickly enough and this affects the timing in many instances.

There are exceptions, however. People like Kathy Holst, Vanessa Harris, Judy Rowat and guest artist Dana Luebke have had dance training and are a joy to watch.

Generally, there isn't enough pizzazz put into the pieces, especially a number like "Easy Money". This piece should have the cutesyness and schmaltz to make the audience want to stamp their feet.

Dancers should also look like dancers. Bulges in body suits are a very distracting site.

The visual affects are outstanding. The music was effective in creating a mood harmonious to the setting and the costumes were innovative and funky.

The choreography of "Kaleidolite" is a visual work of art. The dancers rhythmically wave feathered fringes and glo-light fabrics against a blackout. The swaying back and forth and in and out had a transcendental affect.

All in all, the evening was entertaining, funny and visually pleasing. Everyone seemed to appreciate the effort made by a very enthusiastic amateur dance troupe.

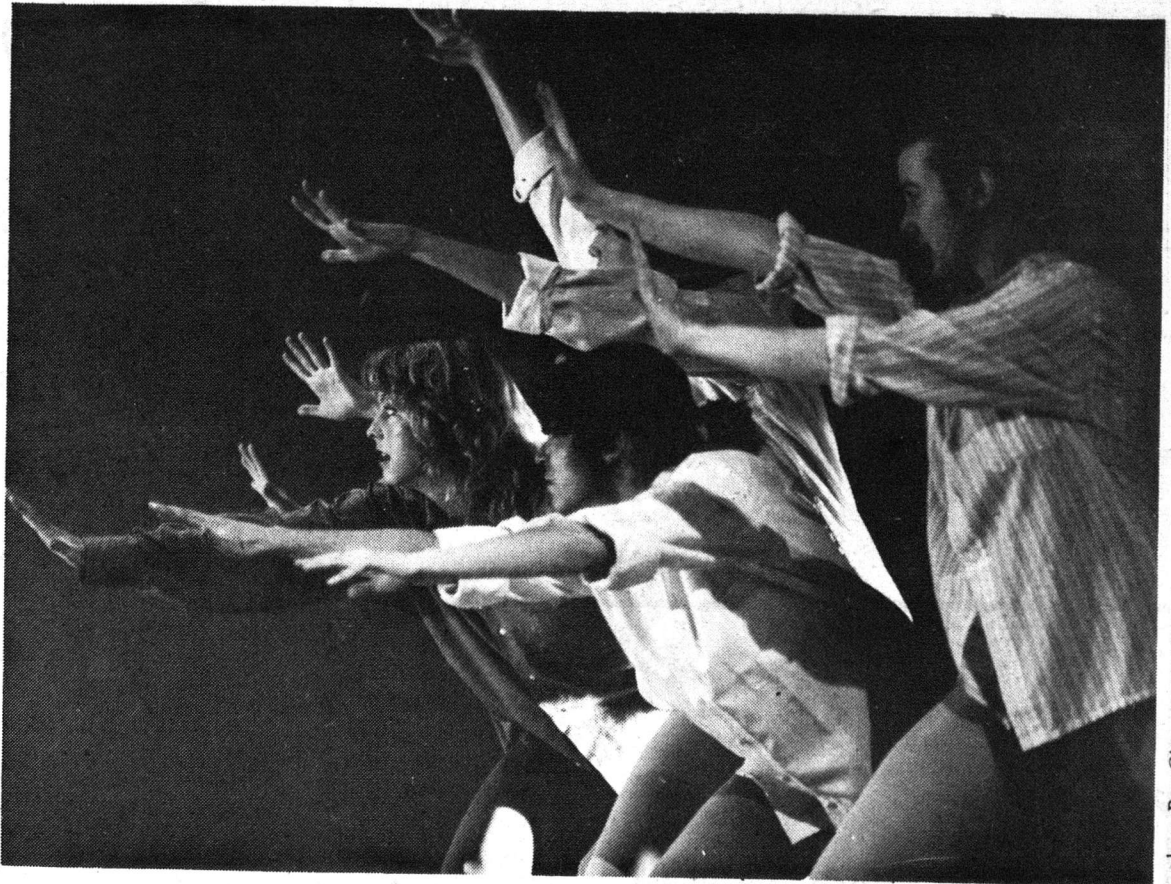


Photo Ray Giguere

## No generous praise for the Miser

The Miser  
Shoctor Theatre  
until March 8

by Candy Fertile

*The Miser* by Moliere begins with everyone unhappy and ends with everyone not only happy but also related. The tying-up of loose ends in the last act piles absurdity upon absurdity but it's so much fun that no one really cares.

The story is that of an old miser Harpagnon and his two children, Elise and Cleante. Elise is in love with Valere, her father's personal servant, while Cleante is in love with poor, fatherless Mariane.

Harpagnon is not expected to approve of either marriage. In fact, he has decided that Elise should marry an old man who asks for no dowry and Cleante should marry a rich, old widow. Harpagnon is very wealthy but values his gold more than his children's happiness. He uses Frosine, a woman of questionable (actually there is no question at all) reputation to arrange his own marriage to none other than Cleante's Mariane. Confusion reigns supreme between Harpagnon and Cleante.

Frosine (heart of gold naturally) decides to help the young lovers. Meanwhile, La Fleche, Cleante's servant has stolen the miser's money. The resolution restores the money to the miser and the young lovers are saved from Harpagnon.

The play gives actors a chance to really romp around the stage. In this production, some do exactly that, while some are wooden and a couple are a bit too much.

Harpagnon played by Graeme Campbell, is quite wonderful. The self-pitying, paranoid old miser is not exactly lovable, but is captivating. Lovable is the work for Frosine (Irene Hogan) who is painted, curled, feathered and flounced to perfection. A complete scene stealer. Frosine moves like an old coquette. She jiggles and minces across the stage. The voice, coarse and loud and tender, hits just the right note. Frosine's experience of the world hasn't hardened her heart to young love, or old for that matter.

Cleante (John Novak) and Mariane (Bwynyth Walsh) are dewy-eyed lovers in true romantic fashion. The other pair fares not as well. Barbara Kyle playing Elise seldom does anything with her body especially her arms. She doesn't seem to fit into the role.

Barry MacGregor playing Valere, Elise's lover, has the opposite problem — which role to assume? Valere is masquerading as a yes-man for Harpagnon to get in his good graces. Sometimes it looks like Valere, sometimes like John Cleese and sometimes like not much at all.

The most irritating performance is that of Richard McMillan in the role of LaFleche. McMillan was in *A Flea in Her Ear* and seems to have done little to prepare for this role except change costume and accent. His movements are identical and are far too exaggerated.

The rest of the cast is fine, particularly Jean Pierre Fournier in the role of Master Jacques.

With the great difference in acting the success of the scenes depends very much on who's on stage. I think a firmer hand with direction might have eliminated some of these problems.

The play is directed by Jean Gascon,

the National Arts Centre's Director of Theatre. M. Gascon is also an actor and this may be why some of the actors get away from him.

The set is appropriately shabby and the costumes are good. The play is fun but doesn't fall into the category of not to be missed.

## Altered space odyssey

ALTERED STATES  
directed by Ken Russell  
now playing at Paramount

review by Wes Oginski

Film director Ken Russell attempts a first-rate impersonation of Stanley Kubrick and his 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. Unfortunately, *Altered States* never transcends this impersonation.

This may explain why the screenplay credit goes to Sidney Aaron, a pseudonym for the disgruntled Paddy Chayefsky, author of the original novel.

Russell is true to most of the book and still manages to lose the audience.

William Hurt performs well as Dr. Edward Jessup, a research scientist exploring "altered states" of consciousness.

As the dispassionate scientist, Hurt is very believable. Even when his obsession reaches a manic peak, Hurt is able to carry the character through.

Countering the Jessup character is Emily, played by Blair Brown. Emily is the most sympathetic person in the film, until she becomes obsessed with Jessup. At this point, Brown overdoes it.

At their first meeting Russell begins his Kubrick impersonation.

Jessup's friend and fellow researcher, Arthur Rosenberg (Bob Balaban), has a party. Emily is there and for the first time meets Jessup. While he enters the doorway, Emily sees only a dark silhouette against a bright background (shades of the monolith from 2001).

Jessup and Emily are married three scenes later. It is seven years later, they have two children and are about to separate.

Emily does not want to, but Jessup is tired of playacting the loving husband, and concerned parent and colleague. He

still is obsessed with discovering the ultimate truth, through altering his state of consciousness in an isolation tank.

While his marriage is breaking up, he discovers an hallucinogenic drug that recreates the original consciousness, the primeval soul.

Jessup's first trip using the drug is a fascinating visual journey. The cinematography and special effects are outstanding.

As the plot unfolds, *Altered States* moves at a quick pace with jarring transitions. This is not necessary for the regular consciousness scenes but does work well for Jessup's altered states.

*Altered States* continues with Jessup experimenting on himself in an isolation tank, consuming dangerous amounts of the drug.

This experimentation soon utilizes enough energy for Jessup begins physically experiencing his primeval soul, manifestations of which materialize into the real world.

The visuals to express this metamorphosis are overwhelming. Each transformation becomes more and more powerful. It is reminiscent of Kubrick's finale in his 2001 film.

Russell builds to his climax with tremendous speed and force, but he does not deliver.

A good story has a character grow. Jessup does grow, but Hurt is unable to express this change. He still acts like the dispassionate scientist after he discovers the secret to life.

While this occurs, Russell amazes the audience with brilliant visual effects. The plot is intriguing, and the acting, though not great, is adequate.

Yet Russell loses control. Acting in the film flounders, visuals overpower and the plot loses the audience's interest.

For a film billed as "a darned scary movie", *Altered States* falls flat on its face.



photo Bill Inglic