

Midnight Oil: power, fun and politics at the Convention Centre

Midnight Oil
Edmonton Convention Centre
Tuesday, October 25

review by Alexandra Parr

My ears are still ringing, but my thoughts are all positive as I reflect on the excellent show put on by Midnight Oil at the Convention Centre on Tuesday night. The power, the fun and particularly the intelligence of the concert made it just a little bit different from anything I had witnessed before.

This is thanks to Peter Garrett's terrific dancing and stage antics, and the amazing songs played by the energetic band, but also because of the messages that went with the music. It's about time that a band with a political conscience came along and

passed it around, in the midst of music that gets everyone dancing, and presented it in a completely unpretentious manner. The time has come...

Midnight Oil played for almost two hours, returning for two encores. They didn't disappoint anyone, mixing new hits from the latest LP, *Diesel and Dust*, with songs from previous albums. The stage was artistically decorated with wood, fencing and wire, complete with kangaroo and dingo. The lights accented the band's sound with silhouettes and sunsets. But all eyes were on Peter Garrett; you couldn't miss him, and you didn't want to because he was ample entertainment by himself.

The "Diesel and Dust to Big Mountain Tour" is in support of "rights for indigenous people", and while songs like "Beds are Burning" and "The Dead Heart" are about

these rights, Midnight Oil did not limit itself to comments about native people alone. In the introduction to "US Forces", Garrett said, "we're going to sing the Australian national anthem in its new form... 'the United States of America and everywhere else, 51, 52, 53...'" Perhaps he should have said the Canadian national anthem? However, he did deliver a scathing attack on Brian Mulroney later in the show, telling us we're not alone — "Brian, your brother is the leader of Australia."

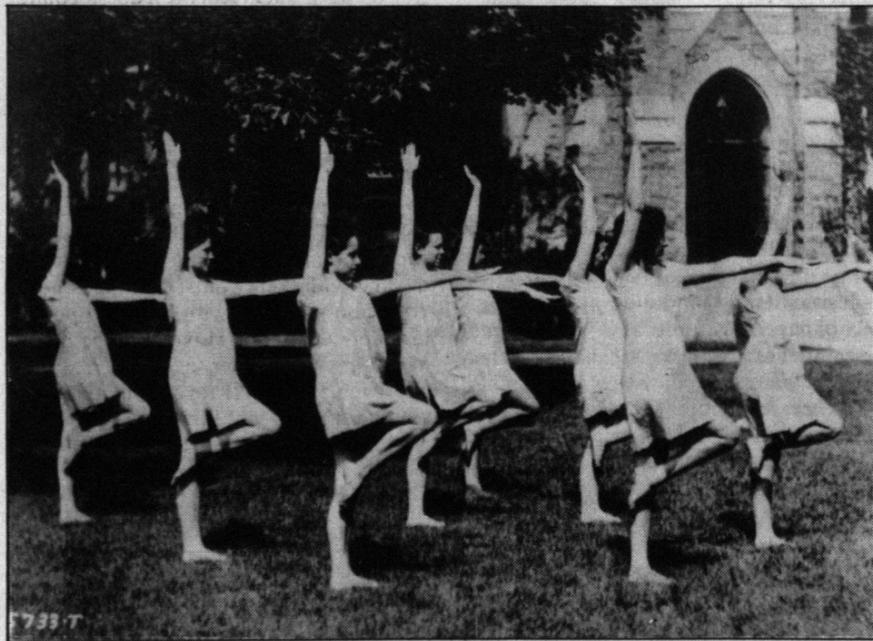
For those who came to sing and dance (as two small girls in front of me obviously did, falling off their chairs twice), it was a successful show, although to me it's almost a shame that Midnight Oil has become so big, since it means we'll never see them in a cabaret setting, where the band would be just perfect (they played the Saddledome

in Calgary). For those like me who didn't know what to expect, the show was probably even better — I was surprised and delighted by the band's LOUD but mesmerizing sound, and I really had to hand it to Peter Garrett when he began "Dreamworld" with the dedication "in memoriam of trees which once produced oxygen."

Opening act Grafitti Man and Yothu Yindi were interesting although clearly somewhat inexperienced. The crowd was attentive and appreciative, for the aboriginal groups have a really different sound and obviously also have something to say through their music (though I must confess I couldn't understand the actual lyrics all that well). All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable debut performance from a band whom I hope will be around for some time.

Arts & Entertainment

Female film festival a first for Edmonton



"Dance of the Robots" from *The Women of Summer*, a 1986 film set in 1921.

by Moira Coulter

In-sight, Edmonton's first ever festival of women's films and videos, will begin tomorrow and continue throughout the weekend, with all screenings taking place at the Tory Theatre Building. This three day event sponsored by the Women's Program in the Faculty of Extension and the National Film Board is designed "to provide a venue for women's films in Edmonton," Chrystia Chomiak, publicist for In-sight said. Chomiak also hopes that this festival will encourage women film enthusiasts to get involved in filmmaking.

In-sight will screen fifty-eight films and videos, ranging from regional to international in origin, from early to recent in

cinematic history, and from experimental to conventional in form. All of the selected works, though, are made by women and adhere to broad feminist principles. "These films really do, by and large, explore women's lives," Chomiak said. She emphasized, though, that the films would also be of interest to men.

A flip through the program provides fascinating glimpses of what the festival has to offer. Kay Armatage, the director in attendance, will have two of her films showing, *Bed and Sofa* and *Artist on Fire: The Work of Joyce Wieland*. The latter won the Toronto Festival of Festivals 1987 first Award for Best Canadian Documentary. Mira Hamermesh's *Maids and Madams*, winner of the Current Affairs

Award in Britain in 1986 and the Special Jury Prize at Banff, also in 1986, will also be shown. This film takes a look at apartheid through the emotional relationship between black household workers and their white "Madams". To ensure the successful completion of this film, Hamermesh travelled to South Africa as a tourist, used local film crews and resorted to smuggling clips of the film out of the country daily. And for a change of pace, there will be a comic film about vampires, entitled *Because the Dawn* and directed by Amy Goldstein.

Besides the screenings, In-sight will also run workshops on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday and Sunday morning. These will be open to those who have a keen interest in filmmaking. The sessions promise to be as diverse as the films, starting on Friday with Kathleen Shannon's "Film as an Educational Tool" and finishing Sunday morning with a workshop on lesbian culture and censorship by director Marusia Bociurkiw. Mira Hamermesh, who was scheduled to speak in a panel discussion on problems facing filmmakers, can no longer attend because of health reasons. The discussion will go ahead as planned with the participation of Kay Armatage and others involved in filmmaking.

For Chomiak, the role of women in films has been highly underrated. "Women were involved from the very earliest stages," she argues, pointing out that in 1986, Alice Guy made the first fiction-film, *House Divided*, a work to be shown at In-sight. Women filmmakers offer works different from those of men, Chomiak



Chrystia Chomiak, publicist for In-sight film festival.

claimed, but the distinctions between them are not clearcut, she added. One difference she noted is that collectives in which filmmakers pool their efforts to create a film are comprised of women, and never of men. The use of collectives is "something women really have to offer to the development of film," Chomiak suggested.

Depending on the public reception of In-sight, the film and video festival may become an annual event. "All indications are that it's going to continue," Chomiak optimistically predicted.

Live theatre comes to Earl's

review by Kristan McLeod

The staff of Campus Earl's, comprised mostly of university students, have adopted an old idea to attract new attention. Like Stage West, Teddy's, and a few other restaurants around the city, they have been producing plays to be performed while their audience eats a three-course meal. The last one was held on Monday night, and judging by the audience's reaction, was a lot of fun for all who attended.

The casts of the plays are staff members, and they act out a murder that the customers must compete to solve. The most recent murder mystery, *Murder in Space*, is a combination of *The Princess Bride*, *A Fish Called Wanda*, *Star Trek*, and *Star Wars*. If you go expecting a Broadway-level production, you will likely be disappointed, as most of the cast has had no previous acting experience. The characters are ex-

aggerated (since most are parodies of famous personalities) and it's easy to spot a missed line or cue. But audience participation is the main goal of the cast, and they achieve it.

The idea was conceived as most good ones are; over a beer. Becky Farrar (writer, director) and Bob Long (former co-director) decided a play would be a fun thing to do on an ordinarily slow night.

Farrar graduated from Queen's University with an Honors B.A. in Political Science and Drama. She stage managed for one of the Fringe plays and is currently enrolled in a Film Studies course at the Faculty of Extension at the U of A. She claims "almost anyone can act" but admires those who do as it "takes a lot of guts".

John Price, who portrayed Captain Quark, is one of the few cast members who has had some acting experience. He's attended the Provincial Drama School in



A scene from Mira Hamermesh's *Talking to the Enemy: Voices of Sorrow and Rage*, which examines the Arab-Israeli conflict.

both the beginner and advanced programs, and acts in the murder mysteries because "it's a chance to get goofy".

The two prevalent complaints of the audience (and myself) was that the dialogue was difficult to hear at times, and that the price was slightly high. Eighteen dollars is a little shocking to common university students' budgets when alcohol isn't included, but the price does include other

beverages, appetizer, entree, and dessert. In short, you don't leave hungry.

These plays, like most of their variety, aren't likely to attract any awards, but they are a nice release from the pressures and demands of school. University's increasing competitiveness rears its ugly head even here, though, as one customer complained, "it was really good except we lost!"

Mike Spindloe