

# George F. Walker's Zastrozzi is a great success

Oh God! Here comes the gothic element! were the first words my comrade uttered on that fateful night...the opening night of Zastrozzi!

Last Thursday evening, a friend and I had the intense pleasure of watching Zastrozzi, as put on by the English drama students and faculty. The play, written by George F. Walker was first produced by the Toronto free Theatre in 1977, and thirteen years later, has hit Fredericton. The UNB production ran from February 15th to February 17th.

Returning to my comrade's earlier statement, just what was the gothic element, you ask? The element was within the set consisting of three dark tower-like buildings symmetrically placed upon the stage. The floor was a dark grey, dirtied with speckle-like drops of grayish mauve creating the 19th century Italian look. And the most gothic element of all?...Atmosphere. The atmosphere was beautifully created by not only the stone-like set but the two red lights casting an ethereal and foreboding glow upon the stage. It was absolutely beautiful. It was the heart of gothic.

The plot of the play consisted of the main character, Zastrozzi - who thinks of himself and appears to be the master criminal of all of Europe. He, along with the help of his accomplices, make elaborate plans and attempts at murdering Verezzi - an insane lunatic. The reason Zastrozzi, played by David Boles, ached to murder Verezzi, was to avenge the murder of his mother whom Verezzi had killed...being insane and not knowing what he had been doing.

Within the play there was much conflict not only among the two opposing sides of the plot, but between those characters who are supposedly on the same side. Zastrozzi and his accomplice Bernardo often argue what a great master criminal must and must not do, and what Bernardo must do is to become a perfect shadow of Zastrozzi. Another conflict was Matilda (portrayed as Europe's best seductress), was in love with Zastrozzi who really loved the rich village girl Julia. Further conflict was that of Bernardo's unrequited love for Matilda. The other major conflict between Matilda and Zastrozzi was that both were always fighting over which of them was the better mastermind criminal and swordfighter. Matilda was infuriated when accused of not possessing as much ability with her mind as with her body.

There is also conflict between Verezzi and his tutor Victor. The conflict here is that of Victor trying to set the insane Verezzi straight on his perception of the world. Victor was exasperated at unsuccessfully convincing Verezzi he is insane and really isn't God. When Victor tried to convince Verezzi his life is in danger, and that Zastrozzi is a real man who for three years has been chasing them all over Europe, Verezzi dismisses it as a figment of Victor's imagination. He refuses to leave their inn in spite of Victor's

pleas that Zastrozzi knows of their whereabouts. The reason Verezzi gives is "what about all my followers, they've come miles to see me and I can't disappoint them, I love them all - especially my little caterpillars."

The part of Victor, played by Tom Marshal, was well acted and the most realistic role. The voice of the wise, stable scholar reached out to the audience, and his calm authenticity in the face of danger was believably played.

The part of Verezzi, played by Mike Ingram, greatly appealed to me, for he was indeed the central strand of comic element in the play. His inability to distinguish between what is real and what is not was the main interest of the play.

The virgin village girl Julia, was the other major comic element in the play and was well acted by Clarissa Hurley. The stereotypical naivety of a rich village girl ignorant of the world of criminals, was intensely humorous. The funniest line in the play was the comment she directed at Matilda, who was upset that both Zastrozzi and Verezzi liked Julia more than her. Julia said something like, "Maybe it's the way you dress!" This sent the audience roaring in laughter.

The character of Matilda was played with great strength by Lynn Nercher. With a loud and powerful voice she portrayed the role of a rough and tough whore who always gets what she wants and never looks up to anyone, except Zastrozzi as she is forced to, but tries to rebel against him. Though the part was well played it could have used a little less overacting and a little less of the tough hooker stereotype.

The character of Bernardo, played by Paul Palmer, was not exactly my most favorite in the other world. I didn't like his subservient character at all, and I honestly think the actor could have done a better job at his part. He was too quiet and just a weak-minded obstacle that was only present to contrast himself against the other dominant characters.

And the leading man - Zastrozzi - played by David Boles was a bit overdramatic, but remains to be my favorite character. He beautifully conveyed the mind of a thinker and an elaborate planner. I especially enjoyed seeing another side of his character - the side that was frightened of his worst fears - himself; himself and his nightmares. It was interesting to note that he and his supposed enemy Verezzi, both shared the same problem of not being able to distinguish between reality and illusion. Zastrozzi had nightmares even while he was awake and they drastically affected his thinking and behavior.

The highlight of the action in the play was the swordfighting. It was beautiful seeing those swords clink and crash against one another as the characters leapt around that gothic scene.

sameera hanif

## Get Classical!! by Paul Campbell

Spring Break is on our doorstep, and of course the musical activity, as most other activities on campus, will come to a temporary standstill. But if you are reading this before 12:30, there is still a concert you can take in today before you hightail it for home, or Florida, or whatever you plan to do.

The Friday at Noon Series is held every Friday at Mem Hall at 12:30, and is the provenance of the Duo Pach. Arlene and Joseph Pach have been fixtures in the University musical scene since 1964. They started their stay as Resident Musicians as a violin-piano duo, and have returned to that form. Many are the graduates of UNB who have spoken to me fondly of the Noon Hour Concerts they used to give in their earlier years here, and since they are at it once again, perhaps you should do yourself a favor and drop in to hear them. Their programs are interesting. Today they are playing a pair of sonatas, one by Mozart and one by Beethoven, which have enough in common that it is interesting, and enlightening, to compare them. Arlene does most of the talking, and she is charming in her clear, thoughtful presentations. Beat Feet right away to Mem Hall, and you can probably hear them.

If you cannot, then plan to take in one of the noon hour concerts after you return from the Spring Break. It will be a week for Mozart. The Pachs will be programming three Mozart sonatas: Arlene will be joined by Motria Sabat, daughter of Prof. Jerome Sabat of Computer Science, in a sonata for four hands...all at the same piano. Arlene will herself play a Mozart piano sonata, and Joe will join her for a violin and piano sonata.

For the Wednesday Noon Series after the break, March 7, I will be welcoming violist Chris Buckley who is astonishingly, for a classical musician, a walking encyclopedia of Rock. He not only knows all of the major, and most of the minor bands from the fifties on, but is one of these types who, when he hears a piece can tell you who recorded it and when, who was the producer of the album, and who else has recorded the song. However his fascination with Rock does not intrude on the silky smoothness of his playing, which is supple and gracious. We will play two Duos for violin and viola by Mozart which for sheer charm and joyousness are hard to match, and a movement from the magical Madrigals by Martinu (the alliteration was not intended). So if you liked Amadeus, or Mozart turns you on, or if you are just curious of what it's all about, come Wednesday or Friday, or both (many do), and immerse yourself in Mozart.

Look for a good release of those post break blues and Check out The Grapes of Wrath at the CHSC on March the Seventh... be ready for an awesome fest.

## UNB Film Society: *La Belle et La Bete*

At 8:00 pm on February 24 and 25, the UNB Film Society will be screening Jean Cocteau's 1947 film, *La Belle et la Bete* (*Beauty and the Beast*).

Jean Cocteau entered the ranks of the top-notch film-makers in 1930 with his first film, *The Blood of the Poet*. His artistic interests were varied (ranging from painting to drama) and they added a unique depth of expression to his cinematic work. By the time he filmed *La Belle et la Bete*, his artistry and technical ability had led him beyond the "conjurer's tricks" of conventional film-making. Cocteau had no interest in simply filming a stage drama, but was determined, instead, to discover cinematic analogues of literary devices.

The familiar story of *La Belle et la Bete* provides the occasion for Cocteau's lavish and surreal mise en scene. Beauty's father loses himself in a dark moss-shrouded forest and falls into the power of the Beast. To save her father, Beauty offers herself to the leonine beast. Charmed by his courtliness, and moved by his passionate warmth, she conceives a tenderness for him. Ultimately, the distinction between her human lover and the Beast blurs, and in a final metamorphosis, they become one.

*La Belle et la Bete* has been hailed as one of Cocteau's greatest successes as a film-maker. The sumptuous sets and the brilliant make-up by Christian Berard, together with Cocteau's inspired interpretation of the fable, have led *La Belle et la Bete* to be hailed as one of the "classics of foreign film." **press release**

## Cast of *"La Belle et La Bete"*

Director:

**Jean Cocteau**

Artistic Director:

**Christian Berard**

Cinematographer:

**Henri Alekan**

The Beauty:

**Josette Day**

The Beast/The Prince:

**Jean Marais**

The Father:

**Marcel Andre**



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