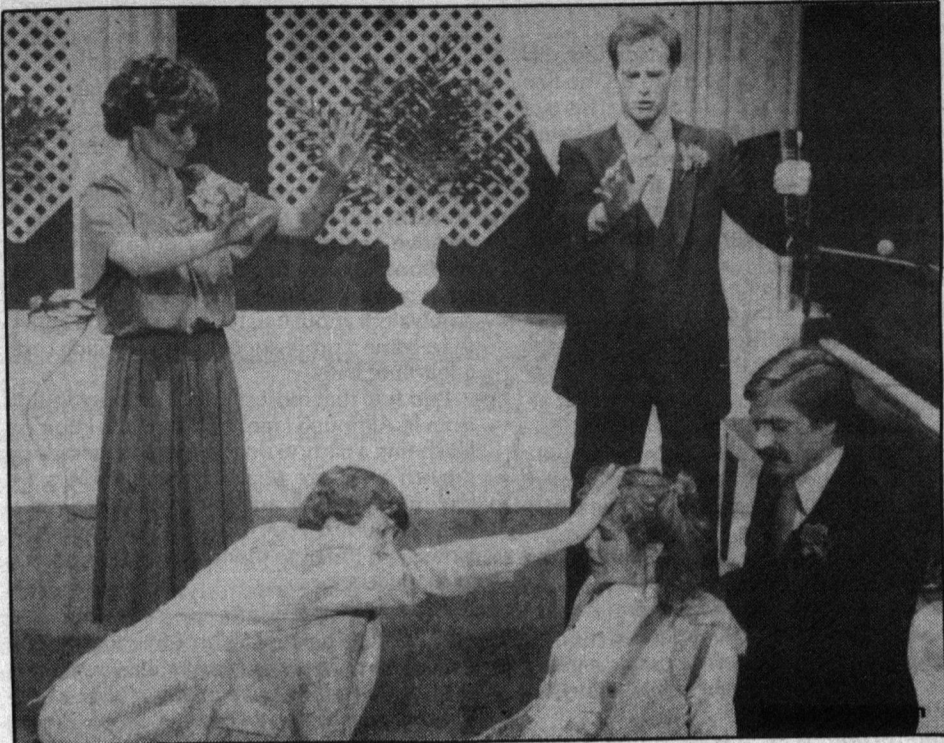


ENTERTAINMENT



Entire cast of *Gimme that Prime Time Religion*.

A walk on the fundamental side

Soap opera saviour

Gimme that Prime Time Religion
Nexus Theatre
McCauley Plaza

review by Scott Keeler

Deep in the bowels of the city centre, in the McCauley Plaza, there lives one of those quaint, one hundred-seat theatres that seem to be popping up all the time. *Gimme That Prime Time Religion*, now playing at the Nexus Theatre, is a really slick parody of TV evangelism adapted for the Edmonton audience. The production is almost flawless.

Almost. There was a great potential to comment on the mentality of some of the people in the TV evangelism business, but somehow this production didn't quite fulfill the potential.

The magic of theatre does, nevertheless, come alive at the Nexus. The magic starts with some good old religious tunes, supplied live by a piano-playing actor on stage. The

uncluttered set also captures our imagination, and the built-in video monitors add to the atmosphere. The stage performs as well as any of the actors do.

Marianne Capithorne is marvelous in capturing the character of Tammy, a "groupie" of Reverend Arnest Engley. She should be, considering that this is her third run of *Gimme That Prime Time Religion*. Her hubby, Orville Adams, played by Steven Hilton, also performs magnificently. Capithorne and Hilton are both to be congratulated on their fine singing voices. Murray McCune, another third-timer, plays the over enthusiastic, nervous piano player, Dean Goodman. As for Robert Winslow, playing the Reverend Arnest Engley, look out, all you evangelical types, Rev. Engley is on his way!

With superb acting, fantastic directing, and great humour, *Gimme That Prime Time Religion* is a must for everybody, except maybe for Born Again Christians, who take their evangelism seriously.

Arnest Engley interviewed

story and interview by Gilbert Bouchard

"The mandate of the Nexus theatre is to do theatre in time and places not currently being served," said Nexus Theatre artistic director Ben Henderson.

The Nexus theatre specializes in lunch-time and late night Theatre in the downtown area located in the McCauley Plaza.

So for the price of a movie you can take in a one-act play and still be back before the boss gets mad.

"We do shorter length plays because we have to stay within the lunch hour," said Henderson.

Henderson also describes the Nexus as community theatre, "lively theatre with an edge, real high energy stuff." He also mentioned that the Nexus does accept unsolicited manuscripts and would like more new short works.

The Nexus would also like to return to doing restaurant show, "late at night, 10 or 11 pm," said Henderson. And while they are currently without a restaurant, they would like to return to doing some more "poor man's dinner theatre."

Henderson also mentioned that they don't always do regular evening shows, but are making an exception with *Gimme That Prime Time Religion*. "Because of its popularity at the Fringe Festival, we figured that people who hadn't seen it there might want to see it now, and wouldn't be able to see it at the lunch hour," said Henderson.

Gimme That Prime Time Religion was a collective creation between director Henderson, lead actor Robert Winslow, and the rest of the cast.

The Gateway spoke to Robert Winslow last week and discussed some of the work that went into the production of *Gimme That Prime Time Religion*.

Q: What kind of research went into your role?

Winslow: Well, I mainly watched television. I watched this guy on television for about six months before I did the play for the first time. I also went to some of his rallies, and I've gone to other evangelists as well, one particularly, in Edmonton. It's basically through television, which is sort of ironic, since it's about TV evangelists, and I've learned the role through TV.

Q: Do you think the play is maybe preaching to the converted, that the people coming to see the play are already skeptical of TV evangelism?

Winslow: To a degree, but I think that people who come to the play would watch the stuff on television, perhaps, but would not go to the rallies and experience evangelism

and how it works on people. So I think there's a place for the show, even among the converted, because I think it's really about how evangelism can get to somebody who's trying to make up their mind about their life, who is really confused.

Q: What has the reaction been - I know Alberta is fairly Bible belt - how have Albertans reacted to the play?

Winslow: It's been really positive, and I have a feeling that it's partly because it is such Bible belt, and people who come to the show have relatives, or friends who have been involved in this sort of thing. I had no idea how wide-spread this kind of evangelism was until I came out here. This whole province is really the Bible belt. Especially the middle part of Alberta.

Q: So there's been no really negative reaction?

Winslow: Not really. We've had people walk out and we've had one of the evangelists in town do a review of us: He was kind of upset. We haven't been picketed; we haven't had any real negative response. I don't really think it offends people's faith. I think its showing how religion can manipulate, just as other forms can manipulate - political forms.

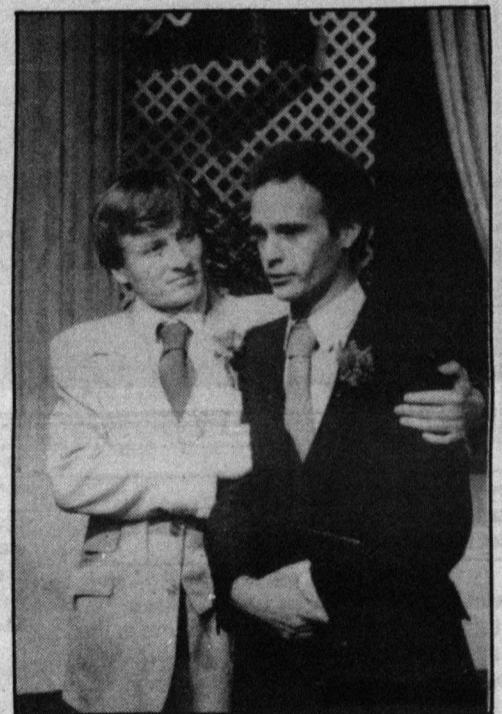
so I don't think its attacking faith - if it was doing that, then I think we would have more negative response.

Q: Could you tell us a little about your background?

Winslow: I started acting in 1979, and basically through amateur theatre and university theatres I've been working my way up to professional status. I came to Edmonton two years ago, and I stuck around because I've been getting a lot of work here, and I'm very happy to be here. I think there are a lot of really exciting theatres here: Theatre Network, for example, that does a lot of good works, Chinook...there's just a lot of theatre activity here.

Q: Are you doing any works in the near future?

Winslow: I'm doing an upcoming show with Theatre Network called *First Snowfall*. That's going to be their Christmas show. And then after Christmas, I'm going to be doing a tour with Northern Light Theatre, *Prairie Church*, which was filmed by the CBC, and is going to be airing soon. And the, I'm talking with



Robert Winslow and Steven Hilton in *Prime Time Religion*.

some people about maybe doing an independent production of a new Canadian play.

CABARETS

DINWOODIE
2nd Floor SUB

DOORS
8:00 pm

Tickets are available from the SUB Box Office (2nd floor SUB) and various club members.
NOTE: These events are open only to U of A students, staff, and guests. Absolutely no minors admitted!

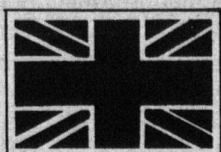


Alpine Howlers Ski Club

presents
The Villains

Friday, October 19

• 8:00 pm



U of A Chinese Students' Assoc.

PARTY DANCE

Friday, October 26 • 8:00 pm

UP & COMING: DAVID WILCOX & guests SNEAKERS • Saturday October 27

STADIUM CARPARK CLOSED. PLEASE USE EDUCATION OR WINDSOR CAR PARKS, ZONE M OR W. SORRY FOR THE INCONVENIENCE.