

Disconnected (but who cares?)

BY LUKE DOBEK AND ELANA JACOBS

By the time we got there at 1am, the party (i.e. rave) being put on by the Family had actually been disconnected from the internet. Supposedly, the computer linking Halifax to the five other cities (Boston, Atlanta, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and Toronto) partaking in *Connected* had crashed.

But the funny thing was no one cared. Most people were too caught up in the dancing, and even when they were taking time out in the chill out room or walking between the two soundstages, no one mentioned the party's missing gimmick. Maybe the beats had left them too satisfied to care.

The headliner for the Mar. 13 party, Eric Davenport from Los Angeles, had a good time up on the DJ tower, even if the stuff he spun was a little lacklustre at times.

The real showman ended up

being Toronto's Freaky Flow. That's definitely where we were from three to five in the morning! Let alone that his funky fresh vibe packed the room with dancers, his turntablist style (like scratching records behind his back) attracted an amazed throng of onlookers. When we spoke with him later on, he surprisingly felt as awed as his admirers — a crowd had not been this mesmerised by him in a long time.

But besides the music, an overwhelming aspect of the party was the people. Dancing amongst the massive crowd, you could have ended up beside local DJs, candy ravers (i.e. candy kids), drag queens in full regalia, or those ever-shirtless Reflections boys. The music had brought everyone together, and everywhere you looked, people were having the time of their lives.



photo by Elana Jacobs

Little choirs, little tours, great sound

BY TRISTAN STEWART-ROBERTSON

I have to admit feeling a certain nostalgia as I sat in the pew of the Bedford United Church watching my not-so-little brother sing. As a former member of the Saint John Rotary Boys Choir, I remember when our sound was as clean, crisp, and precise as that of the Saint John Rotary Young Men's Choir last Friday.

The choir, made up of 19 young men whose voices have changed (necessitating their "graduation" from the junior choir)

was on their grand Nova Scotia tour, consisting of Wolfville and Bedford.

Together with The Cantatrice Ensemble, the two choirs performed a wide variety of tunes from Mozart to Ralph Vaughan Williams; from "Fare Thee Well Love" by The Rankins to "I's the B'y"; from "In Flanders Field" to "Get a Job" and "Stand By Me". The Cantatrice sang what surely any music student has sung at one point in time, Oscar Peterson's "Hymn to Freedom".

The all-female Cantatrice have a wonderful quality and unity of sound. Their enjoyment of music could be seen on almost every face, and in the exuberance of the director, Karen Newhook-MacDonald.

Being a considerably large-sized choir, the Cantatrice were at their most impressive when I heard the multitude sound as one voice.

Not to diminish the Cantatrice, nor to favour the men's choir, but the gents were impressive for an entirely different reason. The

vast majority of their songs were performed without piano accompaniment. The control of sound and tone was crisp and precise with almost perfect unity of voices. Blend is an absolute law in a choir and this group has developed blend and harmony to a fine art.

To conclude, the choirs joined for a somewhat nationalist finale. After a tune by Purcell, and before the "Battle Hymn of the Republic", the two sang "This is My Home", the other anthem played repeatedly

on Canada Day. In some ways it has become a more stirring piece than our official anthem. What was well timed about the piece, though, was when, on the final melodic ascent toward that last chord, a train passed on the tracks outside, blowing a long note through an open window. The audience and performers beamed with smiles as they appreciated the somewhat patriotic salute by the train.

Without a doubt, this was a splendid way to spend a Friday evening.

Moving through the process

Cowbells, love as wine and the Bacchae

BY AVI LAMBERT

The Bacchae is the next and last student play to be put on this year in the Dal Arts Centre.

Shahin Sayadi, a fourth year Theatre Honours student is directing and producing the play.

I got my first taste of the play while walking by the phallic statue outside the Arts Centre several sunny days ago.

People were dancing and flailing to the sounds of congas and cow bells. I thought it was more of a celebration of the weather than a play.

But I spoke to Sayadi at a recent dress rehearsal to see what the play was all about.

The willing cast had been there for a while. They were tired,

hungry, and patient — and patient isn't usually a word you find beside hungry and tired.

It was a pleasure watching the rehearsal. The feeling I got from Sayadi and his cast was good mutual interaction, respect, and a joy for theatre.

Sayadi gives the impression of really thinking before he speaks. It's a good feeling. Though I don't know if I'd stand around all day without food.

The play is interesting from all angles. There is no set, and there are only 35 seats per performance. But the most intriguing thing is the production itself. In this case, the process of making the play may be equally as interesting as the finished

product.

Sayadi has had the rehearsals documented to "[be able to look at it] some time in the future, [so] we can look back and say, 'it was about the process.'"

The process of creating this play was a trip to be sure.

Sayadi departed from normal systems of staging and theorizing in *the Bacchae*.

When I asked him if the play was going to introduce anything unique, Sayadi responded in a truly zen-like fashion.

"if you allow the art to come out, and if you stay true to what the meaning of it is, then it will be in every sense [unique]."

Sayadi made it clear that it

was important to not commit to any system. "Theatre has been theorized all the time," Sayadi said, "and sometimes we forget it is not the theories doing the art, but the people that are actually out there."

"Sometimes we use the perspective that, 'let's not look at the artists, let's look at what the critics are saying.' That's one of the things I kept reminding myself and everyone of. We have to stay true to our intuitions and feelings, [rather than] reasoning what should be done."

But let's not get too deep into the process.

From what I saw, *the Bacchae* reeks of Dionysian ecstasy and abandon. It made me think its place

and time in this year's program was strategic. The play is like an intricate and delicate theatrical version of Alice Cooper's "School's Out".

But the play does suggest far more serious issues.

The play takes place in Studio One, and as I already mentioned there are only 35 seats. The seats are arranged so the audience is right in the middle of the performance.

I don't want to give too much away, but any play with hand drums, love as wine, and the death of a king has got to be good.

The Bacchae runs from April 5 to 10 next Saturday, and most of the tickets are already gone. You'd better hurry.

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