



Drama society to present *Jesus Christ, Superstar*

by Anya Waite

The Dal Drama Society has been rehearsing for five weeks for the spring production of *Jesus Christ, Superstar*. Directed by Glenn Walton (who recently directed the successful *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*), and produced by Robin Johnstone, a theatre student at Dalhousie, the production is a massive undertaking. To coordinate a cast of fifty-five, a full orchestra, as well as choreograph, and arrange lighting and music is a demanding and ambitious task.

Glenn Walton, sitting in the quiet, echoey McGuinness Room far from the hub of activity in the

production office, seems to have the imagination to see the finished production on the empty stage before him. Knowing exactly what he wants, he is working towards the completion of his goals with an admirable clarity of vision.

"We're working for a middle line between a modern and a traditional production," Walton said during a brief interview, "that means, not the literal interpretation, and not the hippie look — Scenographically, I'd like to work especially with lighting, associating Jesus Christ with light."

Walton is especially interested in what he calls the "dual function" of the musical: telling the story of

Christ's passion while at the same time examining it from a modern perspective. As an example, Glenn focuses on Judas as one of the most interesting figures in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. "He (Judas) is an essentially existential man," Walton says, "torn by doubts about his own beliefs."

Glenn is enthusiastic about the cast: Brian Tomie, a physiotherapy student, has the "supercharged energy Judas needs"; Jim Petrie, a voice and education student, is "tall, dark and holy-looking, with the right sort of gentleness for Jesus with a gorgeous voice", and Glenn had nothing but praise for Liz Beeler as Mary, Doug Carrington

as Pilate, Ian Clifford as Herod, and Anne Johnson as Simon Zealotes.

Working with Walton on the production are technical directors Chris Hall and Mike Scher, and stage manager John Perkins. Conducting the orchestra will be Sandy Moore, a comedian, and cabaret performer who has travelled across the country doing musical theatre.

Penny Evans, dance teacher with the Halifax Dance Association, recently involved in *Winter Dance*, and currently in *Choreographers' Showcase*, is doing the choreography. Stuart Heisler and Sarah Ornstein are in charge of costumes, all of which

will be made especially for the production.

Technically, according to Walton, there are far fewer problems than in *Joseph*. They learned a lot from their experiences with *Joseph*, and now know how to overcome the basic structural hurdles as well as being aware of the technical limitations of the McGuinness Room.

"One thing we discovered in *Joseph* was how bad the acoustics were," said Glenn, "and to allow for that, we're moving the audience closer to the stage. Unfortunately, it has also meant that we'll have to make many of the solo numbers." They had tried, apparently, to book the Dunn theatre or the Rebecca Cohn, either of which would have fulfilled their acoustic needs, but had not been able to secure suitable dates.

Watching a dance rehearsal of the Overture number, I was struck with the atmosphere created on stage, even though the blocking was incomplete. Penny Evans' choreography was designed to complement Glenn's vision for the overture: an interplay of light and dancers in a striking "ballet of pursuit". Penny was enthusiastic about

the 12 dancers, saying they were "a good group to work with; they form a real, cohesive unit with lots of strong stage personality."

The production is at the stage right now where the constituent parts are being individually polished, and need only to be united in Walton's proposed structure.

He said that they are keeping well within the \$10,000 budget proposed by the Student Council. Considering that the rights to the play alone cost \$150 per performance, this in itself seems quite an achievement. With their proposed publicity campaign, Walton hopes to break even. *Jesus Christ Superstar* is a great name for attracting attendance and, of course, ticket sales won't be hurt by the fact that the musical will be playing over Easter. As Glenn says, "Besides, it'll be a great show, and that's always a good way to draw people isn't it?"

Jesus Christ Superstar will be seen March 30-April 7 (except on the Saturday) at 8 p.m. in the McGuinness Room. Tickets will sell for \$4.00 and \$5.00



"A small step for Wormwood's . . ."

by KimRilda van Feggelen

A lavish film menu, Wormwood's, an independant film group which has worked hand-in-hand with the National Film Board for seven years, has recently acquired the upper floor of 1588 Barrington St. (above the Bean Sprout). Construction of the theatre has been ongoing for the past month and a half, with help from volunteers as well as cinema staff.

The new theatre seats just under 100 people and will operate seven nights a week. Screenings are still cheaper than commercial theatres at \$2.75 a ticket. For the most part, Wormwood's will be screening newer 35mm films and lots of old, 35mm "classics". Gordon Parsons, the scheduling director of Wormwood's, will also continue to do the Wormwood's screenings at the NFB, and plans to schedule cross-overs in the two programs. One

example of this will be a science fiction film series in May.

Parsons also plans to feature a number of major directors. Eight films of Japanese director Akira Kurosawa (best known for "The Seven Sumarai") will be shown in March and April. There will also be a number of films, two based on the writings of Graham Greene, by Cannes and British award-winning English director Carol Reed (he directed "Oliver!").

Wormwood's will also premiere new Co-op films — Halifax filmmaker Lulu Keating's film "Funny Things" will be shown with "Diva" in April — and will present some thematic film series with topics such as "B-Horrors" and "Music Films".

A copy of Wormwood's new schedule is available at either their new location or the NFB (1572 Barrington St.).

Doctors don't make House Calls

by Ken Burke

Like a bad acid flashback or a twisted re-creation of past history, Doctor Gonzo is up to his old tricks again.

Scheduled to appear at the McInnes room March 15 for a student union-sponsored lecture, author and 60's cultural icon Hunter S. Thompson backed out just 30 hours before the lecture. He then moved the date back one week — to March 22. The reason was typically Thompsonesque over-indulgence.

The deal came down to Campus Activities director Marie Gilkenson at 11:15 on the morning of the

fourteenth. Gilkenson said an agent for Thompson's lecture bureau broke the news.

The agent said Hunter called him at home — at seven am — and said he had just missed deadline on a heavy *Rolling Stone* article and couldn't come here," related Gilkenson. "He's holed up in a hotel room in Key West, Florida, trying to get his act together," she moaned.

Gilkenson, who has never talked to Thompson, pressured the agency into setting up the March 22 alternative date. Thompson agreed, but matters are still far from settled.

"The agent said Thompson lives

in a world of his own," she said. He doesn't care about contracts."

Tickets bought for the March 15 date will be honoured at the March 22 lecture, Gilkenson said, adding that less than ten people asked for refunds. Over 500 tickets were pre-sold, on a preferential seating basis. Tickets are now on sale for the new date.

As for assurances that next week won't see a repeat performance by Thompson, the lecture bureau agent said there were none. "When you deal with the Hunter Thompsons of the world, there are no absolutes," he said.

