

Revived Bacchae has revolutionary form

By JIM PURDY

The cultural myths created by artists unconsciously reveal the inner being not only of the artist himself, but the social climate in which he lives and, by further extension all of mankind.

When the Greeks acted out their rituals and revels and performed their dramas, they were expressing deep-seated urges and fantasies. Freud found the myth of Oedipus expressive of an unrealized complex in all men while Euripides' "Bacchae" centers upon the conflict between man's animal sensuality and his sense of reason and order. This conflict applies to all men in all times, particularly today between sensualist cultists and law and order fanatics.

Recognizing this, Richard Schechner revived the Euripides play on off-Broadway in a revolutionary format of audience confrontation and participation, and this interpretation has been brought to the Studio Lab Theatre in Toronto.

Its revolutionary form -- perhaps its most interesting aspect -- is simply a revival of the original Greek drama rituals to Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry. The action takes place in a small arena formed by a circle of scaffolding where the audience and cast lounge. D'Arcy McHale silently lingers about the arena as the audience enters, taking their hands, caressing their faces and looking tenderly into their eyes to become intimately acquainted and

break down the usual alienation between audience and performer.

After introducing himself, D'Arcy re-emerges naked and, in a beautiful sequence is re-born as the god Dionysus. He leads his followers, including the audience, into a dance of bodily contact where individuals group together into masses of interlocked bodies. But Ernie Schwartz, as Pantheus, the king of Thebes, enters and breaks up the revels and reprimands the Bacchae.

The confrontation between Pantheus and Dionysus puts forth the major conflict, one arguing for reason and order, the other for love and sensuality; both for peace and happiness.

When Pantheus refuses to give into him, Dionysus simply leaves him alone, without the natural love that only Dionysus can supply. Pantheus becomes Ernie Schwartz, isolated in the center of a mostly hostile audience where he is scorned by some, given sympathy by others. The audience becomes louder and more anarchic, screaming obscenities at Ernie and fighting among themselves.

When Dionysus finally re-enters, the broken and unwanted Ernie is willing to do anything for ac-

ceptance. He is left naked in the middle of the stage while Dionysus sends in the mother of Pantheus and a group of hysterical revellers, who give him ecstasy and slaughter him in a bloody orgy of death and destruction.

Realizing too late their action, they mourn the loss of Pantheus and are dismissed by Dionysus, angry at their inability to accept Dionysian sensuality which demands the sacrifice of reason. He then lets loose a diatribe against the audience who also as expected, killed Ernie with their anger and insults and now sit mourning his loss. D'Arcy angrily dismisses everyone from the theatre, while the bloody naked Ernie lies in his "false death" in their midst.

Throughout the evening, the audience becomes intrinsically a part of the action and the cast. The lack of physical distance between spectator and performer, the actor as person introducing himself by his own name and telling us what he did during the day, and the involvement of everyone in the dancing and debating, makes the audience participate in the action. They revel with Dionysus, jeer and slaughter Ernie, mourn the loss of reason and are dismissed by the angry god.

In this way they are not alienated by merely intellectually analyzing an abstract thesis presented in play form, but emotionally experience that thesis, so that its concepts and problems are violently imprinted on their mind.

It is not easy to dismiss a problematic situation one has lived through and confronted on a personal, emotional level. After bearing the brunt of D'Arcy's

tongue-lashing and stepping around the bloody corpse of Ernie, one cannot help but feel the conflict within oneself.

The need for both natural, sensual pleasure and for creative,

understanding reason is obvious, but the acceptance of one requires the sacrifice of the other. Their interrelationship can be achieved only through their opposition, one extreme opposing the other to maintain an acceptable balance.

This appears to be mere dry theorizing, but the use of blatant confrontation and involvement places it on an emotional plane where response is difficult to avoid, for resolution of the problem is made to be resolution of a personal experience.

DR. STRANGELOVE

Stanley Kubrick's
macabre comedy

plus

THE HAND

An equally macabre
Czech short

THIS SUNDAY 8:30 p.m.

BURTON AUDITORIUM

TICKETS: \$2 (\$1.50 Faculty ; \$1 Students)

GRANDE ILLUSION

Jean Renoir's
study of the effects of war

plus

MEMORANDUM

an N.F.B. film

THIS SATURDAY 8:30 p.m.

BURTON AUDITORIUM

TICKETS: \$2 (\$1.50 Faculty ; \$1 Students)

BIRTH OF A NATION

The original three and one-half hour version complete with the original piano score played live by Charles Hoffman.

THIS FRIDAY 8:30 p.m.

BURTON AUDITORIUM

TICKETS: \$2 (\$1.50 Faculty ; \$1 Student)

Back-up band feeble

B.B. King should change show

By PAT KUTNEY

The Masonic Temple (Club Foot, Rock Pile, Club 888, et al) re-opened last weekend -- under new management -- with B.B. King.

B.B. King's three shows were unchanged, with one exception, from those he gave at previous appearances in the city. For an infrequent patron of pop concerts, a B.B. King show is a satisfying experience. But, as an attender of every one of B.B. King's concerts in the last year or so, I have found myself getting increasingly bored.

One would expect that surely by his third appearance in Toronto, his act would be relatively different. But no, he's still doing the same old songs with the same old cliches. Actually King made his own one-liners cliches by repeating them so often. With such reiteration, the credibility of his sincerity seems to diminish somewhat.

B.B. King has never ceased to amaze me with his ability to put together one of the worst back-up bands possible, Sonny Freeman and the Unusuals.

They perform their tasks in a perfunctory manner with feebleness and lifelessness being their two keynotes. Indeed, it detracts from B.B.'s masterful guitar work. It would be far better for B.B. to play solo rather than to have to play in front of that wasteland of musicians.

Despite this adverse criticism, the superb guitar

work of B.B. King can hardly get by without a flurry of plaudits. King's guitar work is a study in subtlety. His flow of notes is never drastic, but yet always filled with emotion. It can be said that the statement "Onstage B.B. King's Guitar is an extension of himself," is more nearly literally possible than any other guitarist and instrument.

B.B. King did do one number in Saturday's second show that was foreign to me. It was more a seminar on blues than an actual song. In it, King, who has directly and indirectly influenced countless guitarists, demonstrated the guitar styles of three musicians: Django Reinhardt, T-Bone Walker, and Elmore James, who all helped to modify, in some way, King's method of playing.

It was a revered occasion for me since I had never heard these guitarists while they were alive.

The crowning touch of this session, however, occurred when King did a comparison of two types of guitar styles, his own and one in the mode of an emotionless and super-fast guitarist like Alvin Lee.

I was mildly surprised at the ease with which King was able to handle the Lee-type piece, but I guess I shouldn't have been. Afterwards B.B. asked the audience which style they preferred.

Naturally, the audience roared their approval for King. But I bet most of the same audience would give some very frantic hand-clapping for Lee's group. Ten Years After, the next time they're in town.

Volunteers album is right on with superb anti-war acid rock

By STEVEN GELLER

HOW TO TELL YOURSELF FROM RICHARD MILHOUS NIXON; NEIL ARMSTRONG FIRST LAST MAN ON MOON; BOY, 18, ACCIDENTALLY SHOOT BROTHER WITH .22 CALIBRE FLAG.

Such are the headlines of the Paz Progress issue supplementing the Jefferson Airplane's latest album Volunteers (RCA LSP-4238), and such is the attitude expressed by the acid rock leaders of North America within their music.

The Airplane members have been overt anti-war advocates since early in 1967. With the release of their After Bathing At Baxters album, their anti-establishment tone became evident as driving, meaningful, although subtle lyrics could be detected:

"War is good business

So give your son,

And I'd rather have my country die for me."

Their next album, Crown of Creation (RCA), was dedicated in its entirety to the problems of America's youth who must mature in a war-prone, nuclear-lined, destinationless world.

The Airplane's latest release, Volunteers, is again similar to their previous material but is less subtle. Although sarcasm is quite evident in its content, Volunteers is more than just a simple, commercially-sarcastic, anti-war cut-up (unlike the trenchancy of Country Joe's Vietnam Rag); instead, it is a social comment focussing upon the evils of a ridiculous war, extending itself from the pitiful plight of the draft dodger as is evident from the lyrics of We Can Be Together:

"We are all outlaws in the eyes of America,

In order to survive we steal, cheat, lie, forge, freak, hide and deal.

We are obscene, lawless, hideous, dangerous, dirty, violent and young. . ."

With Wooden Ships (written by Paul Kantner as well as Crosby and Stills), the Airplane present the terror of a post-war society as they depict the horrific situation after a nuclear war; the horror of wooden ships with black sails knifing through the pitchblende night, escaping from the radioactive land mass and from the silver-suited people who remain to search out the uncontaminated food and safe shoreline shelters.

The title tune, Volunteers, points out life's hardships for the young generation by extending its message to include not only the stigmatized draft dodger but also society itself in a wholistic sense on a comparative level:

"One generation got old,

One generation got soul,

This generation got no destination to hold. . ."

In the presentation of their latest album, the hard acid rock basis is not forsaken by the Jefferson Airplane. Being instrumentally excellent and vocally harmonious pure acid lyrics adjust perfectly to the steady drum beat and the distinct bass and rhythm guitar work with lead guitar variances.

Volunteers is superb. Its theme and quality, marked by a fascinating presentation, make it another great Jefferson Airplane album.