

Entertainment

Skinny Puppy: gurus of angst

interview by Suzanne Lundrigan

Angst is alive and well and living in Vancouver. The band Skinny Puppy is making no small contribution to its continuing survival.

"Vancouver was a good place to start the band," explains vocalist, Nivek Ogre, "it's a gloomy, rainy city. We (Skinny Puppy) come across as very morose. I don't smile very much."

Known for their macabre stage shows (skulls explode and a god-figure lurks), Skinny Puppy strives, "to reflect one man's battle with alienation in a world where there is so much information bombarding him; information which cannot be verified as true."

Ogre explains further, "Our show is a complete experience. We try to create images... don't try to tell me, show me."

Catharsis is a significant part of a Skinny Puppy performance for performer and audience alike. "The show is a vehicle of release for me personally," explains Ogre, "as well as the audience. I truly enjoy what I'm doing. The other day I went into the studio and spent some time screaming, just

screaming. It felt really good."

In performance, Skinny Puppy works to create complete images. "Initially, the performances were a bit of a joke. We decided to tighten things up. Where there was no meaning, we placed images which people could understand," explains Ogre.

"The colour red is predominant. Everything, lyrics included, is geared to creating an image."

Skinny Puppy is embarking on a cross-Canada tour this fall. They will also be making forays into the U.S. and Europe.

The Nettwerk label, which they work off of, has been signed to Capitol so Skinny Puppy shall be making its presence felt near and far. "Capitol is really putting a push on us with interviews and press information," says Ogre.

Life as a guru of angst takes its toll. "What I do is emotionally taxing and elevating at the same time. Let's face it, three years of not smiling very much can be tiring," says Ogre.

Skinny Puppy will be appearing in concert Friday, September 12 at the 700 Wing. Tickets are available at CJSR.



Skinny Puppy at 700 Wing Friday Sept. 12

photo Rob Schmidt

Foster's Boys to premiere

by Suzanne Lundrigan

Director Dorothy Ann Haug exudes energy. Hands aflutter, she talks about Workshop West's upcoming production of *The Melville Boys*.

"Imagine the final golden days of summer. Two brothers decide to pick up a couple of six packs and head out to the lake for one last weekend. Sitting on their cabin porch, the two men see a couple of ladies across the lake. They decide to invite them over... and things progress from there."

The Melville Boys, while comedy, is at turns serious. Haug explains, "Everyone at the cabin is carrying some sort of emotional baggage around with them. Over the course of the weekend, these four individuals come to terms with some fairly serious issues... like death and terminal illness."

Haug pauses, "Norm Foster, the playwright, deals with this topic well. Death is not made mock of... but it does become something which can be laughed about... which is a very human reaction."

Foster, a former top-40 d.j., displays a fine ear for dialogue. Haug elaborates, "He's done an excellent job of capturing the uniquely Canadian way of speaking... you

know how you would imagine 'folks at the lake' talk. As well, his depiction of dialogue between the two brothers is quite accurate. He captures the sort of things that siblings say to one another. His dialogue has that real ring to it... You keep hearing things that you've heard before."

This is the Alberta premiere of *The Melville Boys*. "It has been produced about five or six times so the major changes have been made. Naturally one brings some sort of vision to a work," explains Haug.

Caught during mid-production week, "We've moved the play from the rehearsal space to the actual stage." Haug reflects on the play through a director's eye. "It's always surprising, no matter how many times you've looked at a play during rehearsal, you always see it with fresh eyes on opening night. Oh yes, you do sit there and evaluate, saying, 'That part really soared, but it goes a little flat here'."

Theatre for Haug happens when the audience is present, "Theatre doesn't happen on stage, it happens when the audience is there participating in the play. What excites me about working in the theatre is the potential to affect people."



photo Rob Schmidt

Workshop West artistic director Dorothy Ann Haug

Mediocrity in the face of disaster

King Winter
by D.K. Findlay
Deneau and Greenberg Publishers

review by Scott Gordon

"King Winter" is about a massive snowstorm and how various people deal with it. It is not, as the title suggests, about the reign of a monarch in the quaint mountain kingdom of Snowvalia. This is a book about people, but not like you or I. These people have problems, and these problems drift into each other and they have to deal with them. Pardon the pun.

This is a People book (see above) and how they deal with each other, and their attendant problems, during this huge killer-

death snowstorm in, you guessed it, Ontario. Typical Canadian-type snowstorm, right? Wrong! This is *The* snowstorm to end all snowstorms. If that wasn't enough to get you interested, there are heaps of *Americans* stranded in the quaint, but snow-bound town of Huntly. They range from rock stars to failed cookie tycoons. Can't you just see Joan Collins and Peter (Mr. Mini-series) Strauss battling through massive drifts in their Gucci parkas at this point?

This is basically what this book is all about; the trials and tribulations of people caught up in a natural disaster, or your typical Canadian winter according to Findlay. There are Canadians in this book, and they play

significant roles. The main character, Ryder, some sort of a professor, manages to organize everyone in the town while lamenting on his failed marriage to a jet-setter. He's near to freezing his Ph.D. off and he's wondering what happened. The most interesting character in the books is simply called Pilot, and, as the name implies, is a pilot. He and Ryder were up north sexing whales or something, and they manage to become friends and also manage to whip the town into shape.

Halfway through this book I had the distinct feeling that I had seen this plot somewhere before. Then it hit me like a snowman falling off an igloo; Disaster Movie! 'Airport:1-56'. 'Towering Inferno', 'The Pos-

eidon Adventure', 'Popeye', 'Heavens Gate', and all the other disaster movies (in one sense or another) have this kind of plot: How do people survive and cooperate in the face of a disaster? This book has all kinds of the same devices, from near salvation to evil in the guise, in this case, of a sadistic rapist. Why the rapist is in this book, I really don't know. But it could be because it supplies the obligatory violence that any book nowadays seems to have. "King Winter" even has the equally obligatory sex scene. This is a modern book, and this is a modern author; it has everything required to titillate its readers, and is mediocre enough to make a three part min-series blockbuster.