

Red 'n' Black Revue Review in Review

Well, well, well. Isn't this a surprise. The performers in the Red 'n' Black Revue '91 didn't like our review last week. "We worked very hard!" they scream, "How can you be critical like that? We're just students, after all!" (Wait just a minute) "Who are you to write such a review?" (Wait just a minute) "You've surely displayed your ignorance and lack of any understanding to what goes into putting together a show like the Red 'n' Black!" (Hold it) "It's people like you that give shows a bad name!" (You're serious, aren't you?) "We're disappointed in the Brunswickan for denying their good-reporting responsibilities and sending a HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT to cover this University - centered event." (Okay, that's enough) "If you thought the MC's were to blame for the lack of spark as you called it, or any other act for that matter then maybe you would like to take part in next year's show and display your "talents" or even M.C.??"

That's enough. The absurdity of these and other childish statements made by participants in this years Red 'n' Black Revue (please see Blood and Thunder) staggers me. Who cares how hard you worked? No, quite honestly, I think this is a valid point. You're putting on a show. Okay, go ahead. Please, next year, however, send me a memo or something so I'll know to send someone who will fawn over the amount of work you did, and maybe do a quick fashion commentary. "We worked real hard" - give me a break (I like Kwame's statement mentioning the use of amateurism as an excuse for ineptness) - hard work is simply not related to quality performance as a law. Hard work shows in performance, yes, but only if the performance is good.

Now, I am sure that the '91 Red 'n' Black was presented, as it always is, with the utmost of good intentions and heart, and I also believe in the Revue as an institution, as well as realizing that some actual talent can be found in it every year. Fine. But please, asking for "constructive criticism"? Inviting the reviewer to come on to the stage and do a better job? Grow up. I'm sure Danny Gallavin has called Gretzky a bum for missing a pass (okay maybe not a "bum"), but I don't think Wayne ever (I can just picture him with his hands on his hips and a pouty look on his cute face) said "Well, Danny, if your so smart, let's see you do it right, huh?" If you're going to put on a "professional" show, and want people to take you seriously, expect that some folks just simply won't like it. For whatever reason.

I'd like to end there, but there is one more issue pertaining to this that needs to be dealt with. I'd like you to read the "review" of the Red 'n' Black as seen in Teusday's ERTW:

(Reprinted from the ERTW, Tuesday, November 12, 1991)

The annual Red and Black Review was held last week at the Playhouse. This gave several UNB students a chance to show off their talents. Although it was Artsie dominated, the Engineers stole the show with the Jug Band. Several of your fellow Engineers dressed up as country hicks and played tunes such as "The Scale" and "Oh Suzanna" by clinking their beer bottles. They changed a few of the words to "Oh Suzanna" but they were all in good taste. Here's a sample of their rendition:

*I'm not sure you've heard about our rank
We're not as bad as STU;
Next year they should buckle down
And try for forty-two*

*All you Artsies in the SUB,
Playing cards all day,
Flipping Burgers for a job
Will surely come your way.*

*(after revisions)
All you fags on campus,
You really make me sick.
Instead of having fun with Jane,
You'd rather play with Dick.*

*Tried to bring Red Bombers Back
But we were short on cash;
Instead we fund CHSR,
And all they play is trash.*

Great job guys!

Now, I'm probably one of the first to admit that it's getting hard to say anything that won't be warped or misconstrued as discrimination, exploitation, and racism. I am, however, happy to report that the ERTW, along with their cohorts on stage has, without a doubt, stepped courageously over the line, striding purposefully and gleefully into the category which includes fascist swine, supremacist scum, and mouthy, uneducated filth. This, my friends, is trash. Pure, unadulterated discriminatory trash. The pokes at the Artsies are fun, sure, and even the expressed concern over the funding for the Red Bombers holds some legitimacy, but the line about the "fags" - and what in God's name do you suppose "after revisions" means? Yeah, great job guys.

I have a problem now. We've been accused of "denying our good-reporting responsibilities by sending a HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT to cover this University - centered event." That's one. We've also been accused of lacking "professionalism." That's two. Read the first complaint letter. What do you suppose "an entertaining night for all of Fredericton to enjoy" presumes, and how is related to "University-centered event"? And, (here's the good part) where does the "University" get off projecting to the Fredericton community that we're all a bunch of drunken, Neanderthal homophobes? Is this the "professional" entertainment we're supposed to take pride in? I think Beverly was remarkably restrained.

So, to the ERTW - please keep your humor, albeit poor, at least somewhat tasteful (although I fully believe that the lyrics to "Oh Suzanna" were purposefully and maliciously written to piss people off - on one hand that grants a certain degree of intelligence to the authors but on the other makes them even more despicable), and to the cast and crew of the '91 Red 'n' Black review - I'm sure both you and your audience had fun, and I'm sure you worked your guts out, and I'm glad this tradition continues - we need it badly on this rather stagnant campus. So thank you, but please remember: If you're going to present a show for the whole city, and truly believe in the quality and hard work, think twice before you let a bunch of presumably grown men up on your stage to degrade, insult, and offend.

Chris Hunt

Quick Note: Isn't it interesting how diametrically opposed radical groups create each other? Five years ago I doubt that the ERTW would have printed "all you fags, you really make me sick", but today, the "politically correct" movement has driven them to reactionary aggression. Hegel was right. Hmm. I wonder if the term "politically correct" will be remembered five years from now. Hmm. I guess some things do make you go "hmm."

and again...

Nobody enjoys a bad review. We are not supposed to. They mean that someone, (one person) thinks we sucked. If we choose to grant this one person's opinion the importance of some supreme being, that is our fault. However, we are not to then start screaming "no objectivity!" or we will come off looking like hypocrites. I mean, what is the deal here? We think we were great? Well, we should. We did the job after all. There is nothing objective about that. And what's this about objectivity, anyway? A review is an opinion, it is the nature of the beast. Opinions are necessarily subjective. Now, before the whining Red and Black "talent" decides to take up arms against this little commentary, let me first say that they are wasting their time and severely embarrassing themselves. For some odd reason this bunch of "talented people" are under the impression that amateurism is an excuse for ineptness. It is an ailment that apparently afflicts anybody who works as an organizer of the Red and Black Revue.

I have had close friends who have been transformed into this peculiar brand of fire-breathing monsters during their time with the Revue. What is it? There is the feeling that because they have put so much time and energy into the activity it should guarantee them a pat on the back and full encouragement. The sweat has clouded their vision and they are unable to appreciate that an audience member does not (and is not supposed to) care two hoots how hard people have worked on the show. If they have worked hard on the show the evidence will speak for itself. The Red and Black Revue is not a quaint church youth group Christmas effort that is guaranteed praise by all the family members who have to come out and support the tiny ones. The Red and Black Revue has always had a reputation for semi-professional work. Of course the performers are not professionals, and so we expect that with this variety show format some of the material will be poor. It is supposed to be fun as well, a good laugh. Well, part of the joke is doing something badly. Unfortunately not everyone will get the joke. For the most part, however, we expect (and sometimes get) a slick, smoothly run, effort that aim at high professional standards. If we aim lower we are settling for the mediocre.

One of the first things a performer (professional or otherwise) should learn is how to handle criticism. Reviewers will make blunders, and they may even be jerks but the last thing we need to hear from someone objecting to a review is that the reviewer is being unfair to the people who have worked "so hard on the show." We don't care how hard they have worked! That is not our burden. It is the performer's burden. What we care about is the relative merit of the material presented before us. The truth is hard work does not necessarily mean a good job will be done. Red and Black performers are not doing UNB a favour by going on stage. They are also enjoying the exercise and they get some pleasure out of it. The dancers like to dance, the singers love to sing, the foul mouthed rabble rousers love to rabble rouse, the comedians love to tell jokes and everybody loves to be applauded on the wonderful Playhouse Stage. So no one need pretend that these folks are tragic martyrs who are not being appreciated for all their sacrifice. I am a performer, I have been for years and I hate to make excuses for something that someone hasn't enjoyed. If they hate it that is their business. If I have done all I can do, I don't really have to announce that to the world. It is the burden of being a performer. Sometimes the world loves us and sometimes they hate us, we should not whine about the latter. So Red and Black Revue performers, please come down off that high horse and stop complaining because somebody did not like the show. Maybe you did suck, ever thought of that?

As for this bit about inviting the reviewer to come out and perform - why, it's like Madonna whining that her fans should not complain when she messes up in performance because she can sing rings around them. So what? A mess-up is a mess-up. We all know that reviewers are frustrated artists. They can't do it, and why should they be expected to try. Doesn't mean they can't hate it or love it when they see it. That is why some people are on stage and others watch. If you want praise don't charge an entry fee, and stop pretending that the show is the greatest thing since sliced bread. Enough said. Oh, by the way, Beverly White has as much right to review the show as anyone else including those who have finally made it to this campus. She does because the show was (and has always been) open to the public. Anne Ingram reviewed the show after all. And I don't need to hear that non-students should not be allowed to review shows in the Brunswickan. Come- come. We like to hear from other people as well, don't we? Thank God Beverly is not asking some of you to come and try writing a review, eh?

Kwame Dawes

O'TOOLE'S
DIAMONDBACK

Aerosmith
AC/DC
Steppenwolf
Rolling Stones
Pink Floyd
The Doors
The Who
Lynyrd Skynyrd

Nov. 14, 15 & 16th
\$3.00 Cover Charge

THE ROADHOUSE THAT ROCKS!!

