

Will's Mutt asketh much

Shakespeare's Dog
Walterdale Theatre
through October 8

review by Kevin Law

Sit back brave soul and let me tell thee of the ambitious sights and sounds hoisted upon an opening eve's crowd like a billowing ship's sail full of much wind and flapping canvas.

This be the Workshop West story of young Will Shakespeare of Stratford, who prospers not in ducats, but has much mind to be a great poet and writer of plays. But this be more the story of Shakespeare's dog, a mangy cur so named Hooker who begins this tale... er, tale, of how he rose up from pupdom and came to help Master Will find his way to the world. Master Will, you see, retaineth a frivolous view of the world; he lacketh compassion for his penniless fellow man. Thus Hooker, a dog ordained by his mother to "always fight for the under-dog", most purposely persuades Will to becometh good of heart and substance, thereupon making him a better man for great play writing.

Will, as expertly played by Jeff Haslem, is a foppish fool in his youth, full of profuse energy and hearty of goofy giggle. With concern only for poetry and lovemaking, Will is a capricious fellow who loves words. Indeed, Hooker observes his master to be

"an obscene, gay, ornately loquacious lad... Egad!" Hooker howls, "I listen to his mush and try to sprinkle on it a syllable or two of form."

Yes, Hooker is an extraordinary dog, played well by Michael Murdock with much discipline. One must admire the great physical faculty of Murdock and all play's actors who perform as a pooch. The quality and creativity of costume and set too, is much admired i' th' offing upon Kaasa's rounded stage. Characters both human and canine are many in this tale, with elaborate spewing forth of Elizabethan language. Action also is copious, with great domestic battles and lovemaking 'twixt Will and wife Anne, as well as between dog and dog. Yea, this play be made of proper bawdy earthiness and lyrical power in the Shakespearean manner. It's full of Shakespearean theme and character of every kind. Truthfully, 'tis a great mix of fools and shrews, ghosts and witches, tragedy and comedy and drama.

But 'tis within such excess that audience grief lies, for *Shakespeare's Dog* asks much of a beleaguered audience to concentrate on such great denseness of play's parcel. Perchance too many long scenes and soliloquies lend fatigue to the blood, for two and a half hours of play-making becometh a marathon. I'd cast good council upon this play's passion, for it would seem wise to cut some fat and retain the lean; in so doing 'tis doubtful the

flavor would be lost.

Despite such swaggering bigness, this play is a sight to behold. Those with a Shakespearean bent will truly enjoy this sumptuous feast. It's not often such ribald historical

humour with a classical edge comes to Edmonton-on-the-Saskatchewan. See it with a rested head, and thou will reap many dramatic and comedic rewards 'neath the thick blanket of much ado about something.



Kevin Law

Shakespeare's Dog captures true nature of the bard's work.



Sons of Freedom's Jim Newton bangs a tambourine to accompany his biting lyrics.

Sons offer orgasmic mantra

Sons Of Freedom
The Bronx
Sunday, September 24

by Dragos Ruiu

The Sons of Freedom were a radical Douk-hobor group in southern B.C. that were active around the turn of the century. Their faith was based on non-acceptance of material goods. Sons of Freedom also happen to be a band that performed a great show at The Bronx on Sunday night.

Sons of Freedom are a simple band, true to their name. The four man group delivered their simple driving base and percussion rhythms entwined with flat-edged vocals to an almost full-house crowd.

Besides the show being amazingly good, it is amazing that I can still hear after being subjected to the strategic weapon that The Bronx calls its sound-system. The sound was amazingly clear, and amazingly loud. I was unaware that sounds that loud could be that clear. So the lesson to be learned is that you should sit waaaay at the back to enjoy concerts at The Bronx.

The show was opened up by a local Edmonton group, Big House. Big House is a descendant of Down Syndrome, and unfortunately the bad genes were passed on. The band is, well, errr... (how to put this nicely?) self-involved. They are the big fish in a small pond, and they certainly posed like they

were big media stars. They delivered a passable show, if you didn't pay attention to their overblown stage presence. But enough said about that.

When Sons of Freedom came on they were a breath of fresh air. This Vancouver based, highly political band came on quietly, and blew everyone away. They delivered their hard-driving music with a fury.

Their show mostly consisted of tight clean versions of the songs from their first and only LP. This band formed in 1986, and they must have been playing together alot, because the performance was flawlessly tight. It's quite amazing that this band is not more popular, this show should have easily been sold out. If it wouldn't have been a Sunday night, and if Big House wasn't playing, the show might have been a sell out. Their music is that good.

Vocalist/Guitarist Jim Newton's biting lyrics were sung with the music instead of over top of the music. The Sons' songs start out slowly and build to orgasmic electric mantra. Their intense, sometimes repetitive sound is a bit too scary for some, but their powerhouse rhythms really sound fantastic live.

Their tense first LP was great, and the music they crank out sounded even better live. It probably helped that you could feel the music reverberating through your body at umpteen decibels. After this show I'm now a big fan, and it doesn't seem to matter much that my ears are still ringing...

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