

ARTS

Musical

continued from p.1

them to absurdity."

I presume the reader is familiar with this sort of talk and the philosophy it represents - the "lets get everything out in the open and make sex healthy" attitude, which has gained a large following in the theatrical world.

The name of Lenny Bruce often crops up in connection with this movement as a sort of patron saint (producer Roy says in the program that one of his favorite productions was about the legendary comedian), but in fact he was *not* of that school, and his real position is useful in analyzing just what is wrong with the "honesty and forthrightness" movement.

The theory that Lenny Bruce was in favor of the free use of expletives was firmly entrenched in the public mind with the film *Lenny*, though Paul Krassner, Lenny's closest friend violently protested this lie. (William F. Buckley, for one, accepted the film as the truth.) Lenny himself always maintained that he only used profanity if it fit the character he was miming, and he used it more judiciously than, say, the average taxi-driver.

Sexual words became dirty, Lenny believed, because we think sex itself is "dirty" or shameful (i.e. because we all have hangups and neuroses about sex). As long as we have these hangups dirty words automatically arise to reflect our state of mind.

Lenny makes this point in one of his most devastating routines:

Suppose it's three in the morning, I've just done the last show, I meet a girl, and suppose I have a record I'd like her to hear, or I just want to talk to her - there's no lust, no carnal image there - but because where I live is a dirty word, I can't say to her, "would you come to my hotel?"

And every healthy comedian has given "motel" such a dirty connotation that I couldn't ask my grandmother to go up to a motel, say I want to give her a Gutenberg bible at three in the morning.

The next day at two in the afternoon, when the Kiwanis Club meets there, then "hotel" is clean. But at three o'clock in the morning, Jim... Christ, where the hell can you live that's clean? You can't say hotel to a chick, so you try to think, what won't offend? What is a clean word to society? What is a clean word that won't offend any chick?...

Trailer. That's it, trailer.

"Will you come to my trailer?"

"All right, there's nothing dirty about trailers. Trailers are hunting and fishing and Salem cigarettes. Yes, of course I'll come to your trailer. Where is it?"

"Inside my hotel room."

Why can't you just say, "I want to be with you and hug and kiss you?" No, it's "come on up while I change my shirt." Or coffee. "Let's have a cup of coffee."

In fifty years coffee will be another dirty word.

In short, it's not that words are considered dirty and therefore the words cause love and sex problems; these problems latch onto words and make them dirty. One cannot "defuse" these words simply by repeating them over and over as the musical cast did in the cutesy song "Dirty Words." The personal problems remain and they will continue to find outlets in words.

It was by bringing the problems, not



photo Ray Ciguere

... and at the same time enough cloying sweetness and light to choke a generation of kindly grandmothers.

the words, out into the open that Lenny Bruce made his art. But even here he has been misinterpreted as a prophet of absolute honesty. In his autobiography Lenny mentions that when he and his wife married they made the traditional promise of complete truthfulness to each other. He then recounts the spat that resulted when he honestly confessed to her about an affair he had just passed through, and the lingering mistrust this admission bred. The moral is clear; silence is golden and hypocrisy is a large part of tenderness and consideration.

But the *Let My People Come* cast flaunts the truth: "Everybody likes to screw," they sing. "I want a man with balls," asserts a cowgirl. And worse.

Everybody over the age of thirteen knows this, of course, but by fourteen they realize that saying it out loud and in an earnest manner produces strange looks. There is no more reason for stressing such obvious truths than there is to dwell on the minutiae of salivating and masticating, just because eating is pleasurable.

So much for the musicals' therapeutic value: What about its' artistic merits? In brief, it has virtually none.

The music was "fifth-rate, melodramatic, *Sound of Music* schlock, the singing was ragged and off key, the dancing only slightly above the level of Creative Yoga for Housewives, there were no choreographed routines except for a few kicklines which were badly synched, and the jokes were strictly Bob Hope rejects:

"Oh, look (an actor is licking whipped cream off a banana), a dairy queen!"

Dumb-it-up humor (e.g. a lady attempting fellatio too hastily, ends up knocking a tooth loose), bad puns (e.g. a

country singer called Dolly Hard-on) and nudge-nudge-wink-wink salaciousness all made it seem like a replay of Engineering Week Skit Night.

In between the groaners were songs about the pureness and wonderfulness of love and its various subspecies:

*Takes a lot of time
to build up trust*

Ad nauseam. Calling these songs

insipid would be too generous; there was enough cloying sweetness and light in them to gag an army of Barry Manilows.

But enough, you say, weren't there any redeeming aspects to the play? Well the epidermal displays were as nice as expected (if no more) and the lighting was competently done. Aside from that, nothing.

Of course, as I stated at the beginning, this is a minority report.



Student Vacancies on General Faculties Council Committees

- (1) The **Parking Appeals Committee**, which is a committee of the Office of the Vice-President (Facilities and Services), is seeking student nominations to fill vacancies for *one undergraduate student* regular member and one graduate alternate member for the forthcoming year.
- (2) The General Faculties Council **Undergraduate Teaching Awards Committee** required *two undergraduate student* representatives.
- (3) The **Selection Committee** for the replacement of the Head Librarian requires *one undergraduate* and one graduate student.

- (4) The General Faculties Council **Writing Competence Committee**, whose purpose is to investigate policies and practices with respect to the level of undergraduate writing skills in the University, and further, to monitor the related matters of the reading competence of undergraduates, requires *one undergraduate student* (NOT from Arts).

Term of Office: Immediately to 31 March 1982.

Deadline for Application: Friday, 18 September 1981.

For Applications and/or Information, contact Elizabeth Lunney, Vice-President Academic, Room 259 Students' Union Building, 432-4236.

ARTS QUIZ



Identify the historical personages who said the following:

1. Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle, old age a regret.
2. One or two lies are sometimes necessary, but Metternich is all lies.
3. Thou goest to women? Don't forget thy whip.
4. The secret of being a bore is to tell everything.
5. Soap and education are not as sudden as a massacre, but they are more deadly in the long run.

6. Bibo, ergo sum (I drink, therefore I am).
7. The majority of husbands remind me of an orang-utang trying to play the violin.
8. God heals and the doctor takes the fee.
9. In the turmoils of our rapidly changing society there is a need to reflect on our values and consider the areas in need of attention. Real inequities exist where there is poverty and need and difficulties of communication, and we must consider what can be done to overcome these problems.
10. I am still learning.

Answers p. 11