

Sizwe Bansi not quite dead

by **Maven Gates**

If the Global Village Theatre Group's performance at Mount Saint Vincent University last Friday was inspired by their desire to make a specific political point, it succeeded. However, Athol Fugard's *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* is much more than a statement condemning the policy of apartheid in South Africa.

Sizwe Bansi is clearly one of the most important plays to emerge during the last decade and is not only relevant but elegant in its ability to entertain and move the audience. Through identification with the characters, this play addresses the tragic consequences of all dehumanizing practices that have given birth to atrocities like ghettos, reservations, and pogroms. Yet it still manages to offer a glimmer of hope. Unfortunately, some of the power behind this statement was dissipated by an inconsistent performance.

It was clear at the opening that the piece was off to a bad start. First, there was an unexplained twenty minute delay in starting during which someone from the audience walked across the stage and disappeared through the flats. He emerged a few moments later, picked up a prop, and handed it to one of the actors who had been roaming visibly backstage. The audience was then subjected to an explanation of what the play was going to be about and a biography of the actors. So much for maintaining any mystique.

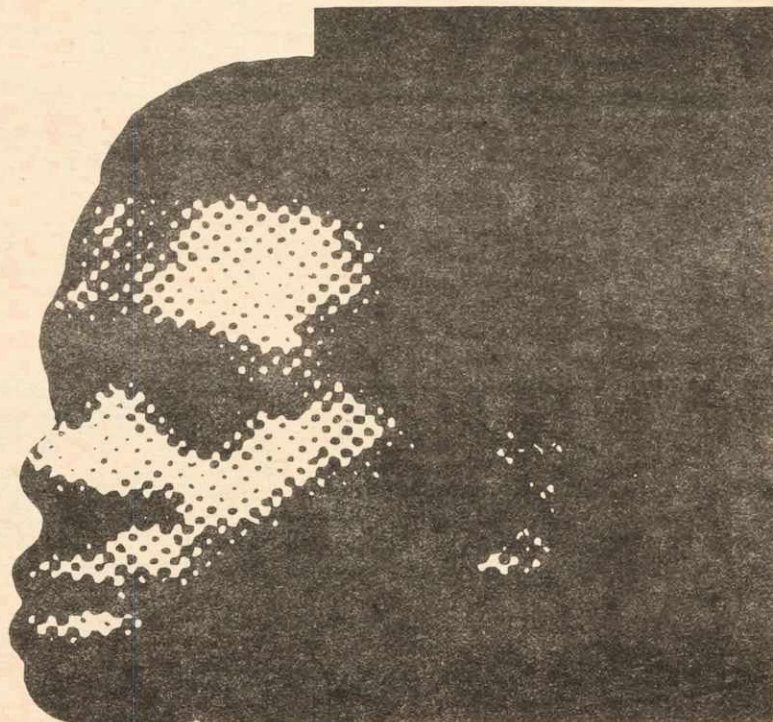
Someone else then took the floor and delivered a commercial for a musical group. If this was not inappropriate enough, it was suggested, not too subtly, that a standing ovation was expected. When the play finally started things began to go a little better.

Karanja Njoroge ably handled the twenty-five minute opening monologue. At times, his perfor-

mance was fiery. He had no fear of making direct eye contact with the members of the audience and, through this technique, coupled with his obvious conviction, managed to recover some of the illusion that his character was actually alive.

David Woods was at his best when he took centre stage alone. His speeches displayed sensitivity, warmth, and a sense of vulnerable ingenuousness. He was not as dynamic as Njoroge, however, and did not manipulate the audience as effectively. This imbalance created some difficulty when the actors played their scenes together. The action often appeared to drag and the lack of a good director was apparent. The overpowered Sizwe (Woods) occasionally came off as dull-witted rather than merely naive and frightened.

There were wonderful moments in this performance, but many more were lost.



Brides showmanship at the Super Sub

by **Betty Ryan**

Rumours that the Blushing Brides are trying to leave their Stones Clones image behind just can't be true. Lead vocalist Maurice Raymond could have fooled anyone last Thursday night at the Dal SUB with his raunchy rendition of Mick Jagger's rockin' antics. The band also came with their very own Keith Richard in the persona of Paul Martin on the slide guitar.

Raymond did a magnificent job of the staple Jagger motions - the leering lips, the famous pelvic pumps, the Jagger jumps. At times his act was a little too contrived - you got the uncomfortable feeling that he really thought he was Mick Jagger.

But this was obviously not a hindrance to the Brides because they belted out some fine tunes during their three-hour show - songs from the Stones' repertoire and their own newly-released album **Unveiled**.

It was great to hear some old classics like "Honky Tonk Women" and "You Can't Always Get What You Want". Raymond showed his mastery of the harmonica on "Midnight Rambler", as he unleashed a 10-minute version of the song. He seemed to lose the crowd a little on this one, though, as it was obvious people were there to party. The Brides obliged with

"Start Me Up". And that's a song no one can help moving to.

Sorry to say, I'm not as familiar with the Brides' album so I didn't recognize any of their own material. But I liked what I heard. Good, solid, rockin' music with, of course, Stones overtones.

The Brides played to a capacity crowd, ending off the night with the old favourite "Jumpin' Jack Flash" - and they got the audience jumping. Things cooled down a little when Raymond splashed both band and audience with a soothing bucket of cold water. But nobody seemed to mind. Showmanship was

what the crowd expected from anyone imitating Mick Jagger.

Showmanship was *not* what the audience got from the local group **Exodus** downstairs. But this band more than made up for their lack of flamboyance with their catchy reggae beat. It's a pity that they had

to compete with the Blushing Brides because Exodus is a band worth listening to in its own right. The few people that stayed to listen to them clearly appreciated their representation of many fine classic reggae tunes. But, who can hope to compete with Mick Jagger - oops, I mean - Maurice Raymond.

Jordan/Dal Photo



For the second year in a row, the Blushing Brides drew big Dalhousie crowds with their almost-Stones act.

Mephisto's struggle

by **Martin Tomlinson**

Mephisto is a true, if not factual, drama. It must surely strike a deep emotional chord in the past and present of every German. The film is a German-Hungarian film production which follows the true story of an individual trapped by devilish fate in Nazi Germany. Even with an Oscar for best foreign film, **Mephisto** remains underacclaimed though not at all undeserving of acclaim.

In **Mephisto** a provincial German actor flirts with the left and a black mistress during the early 1930's. This striking mistress figures prominently in his life (Pan-Slavism and Cultural Bolshevism less so) as the Nazis rise to power. Through ability, the actor reaches the state theatre and wins the acclaim of Berlin.

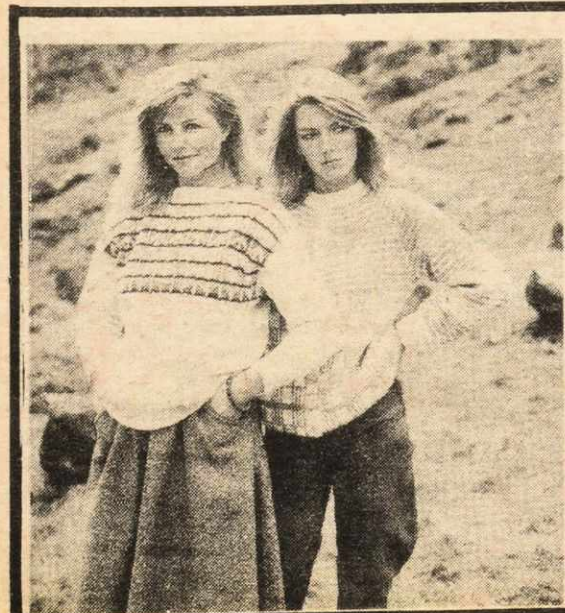
The election of the Nazis inspires brief paranoia, but he feels himself,

above all else, an actor and a German. With the help of an actress, he retains a position in the new theatre with its new ideals. Through adopting these new ideals and working with the regime, he feels he can protect those around him. Mephistopheles derives Mephist, or the Devil in the stage play of Dr. Faustus.

His performances, as Mephisto and others, bring him to the attention of Goring (played to perfection, as are all the roles), who is a loutish brute with pretensions of culture.

"Mephisto" could be the story of any human caught in the struggle of surviving. Like Faustus (the victim of the devil), the actor has sold out.

Mephisto reveals much about the tragedy of the individual. It then develops into an enthralling film on all counts.



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