

"The Abdication" worthwhile

by Sue Monaghan

Ordinarily I do not consider it cricket to relate the plot of a movie in its review. However, in the case of "The Abdication", knowing the context of the story is a necessary prerequisite to enjoying the film.

It involves Christina, Queen of Sweden (played by Liv Ullman) who abdicates her throne in order to convert to Catholicism. She arrives in Rome to be confronted by a skeptical Vatican — due to reports regarding her reputation and motives, which have preceded her. The Vatican Council delegates Cardinal Avilino (played by Peter Finch) to interrogate her. He is noble and sympathetic and soon becomes Christina's confidant. She is revealed to be a confused, and disturbed woman — regarding her sex-role, relationships with men and with women — due to her demanding and stifled upbringing as an adored and yet unapproachable child-monarch.

"The Abdication" itself



takes place in the first 60 seconds, and the rest of the picture consists of confrontations between Queen and

Cardinal, (which don't quite manage to relate the crux of the story until the picture is half over, cut short by

flashbacks to Christina's past. These flashbacks seemed patterned after the "Kung Fu" television series in style and set which often consisted of hundreds of candles and smokey camera lenses. The format may have gone over well in the theatre-play, but the movie would have done better to dwell longer and in more detail on the Queen's past life, rather than wasting time on shots of the golden meadows and lush forest of Sweden, or the architecture and statues of the Vatican.

I have no complaints about the acting, although I did feel that two low-key performances in the two lead roles prevented what might have been a great climax at the end. Ms. Ullman was powerful on her own, particularly when expressing her great attraction and love for one of the beautiful, "feminine" ladies in her court.

See this movie if you're a fan of Liv Ullman, Peter Finch, or/and colourful costume-type movies. In spite of my complaints I still enjoyed it.

entertainment supplement

Pinocchio finds shelter at brewery

A perennial headache for theatre groups in Halifax is the dearth of rehearsal room which is almost as hard to find as parking space, but the Pinocchio Company, now assembled, has found shelter in premises once occupied by the old Keith Brewery, which echo to the sound of music in contrast to the glug-glug of ale pouring into casks to be trundled over cobblestoned streets to town taverns.

John Wood is again directing his own adaptation of "THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO", a Neptune Theatre production, co-presented on this occasion by Dalhousie Cultural Activities. Performances will be at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium in the Dalhousie Arts Centre from December 16 to 31.

The author, Carlo Collodi, was an obscure Italian Pamphleteer who turned to writing a children's serial back in 1881, to make enough lire for an occasional dish of pasta. Nowadays, it is a moot point whether Pinocchio or Peter Pan is the more popular figure; both their stories have been translated in all the languages there are; both have been dramatized and filmed, and while Walt Disney's contribution to the world of entertainment is beyond question, one might wish he had given us more of mis-

chievous Mickey Mouse, Pluto and the Seven Dwarfs and left such treasured favourites as Alice In Wonderland, Winnie the Pooh and the two rebellious boys already mentioned, to the children's own imagination.

Let it be said that John Wood's adaption of this old morality tale bears no relationship to the Disney version, being conceived as a play appealing equally to adults and children. Collodi

himself might have approved of a production in which Wood and designer John Ferguson create an unusually beautiful collage of theatrical images to carry the plot forward, borrowing freely from Stage devices, ancient and modern, in comedy and drama, to seduce audiences of any age. Complemented and enhanced by Alan Laing's original score and the brilliantly conceived lighting of Robert C. Rein-

holdt, this Pinocchio promises more than Christmas-time entertainment - it should be a memorable theatrical experience.

Michael Burgess will play the title role as he did at Stratford's Third Stage in 1972. A versatile actor/singer, he sang the role of Rodolfo in "Hello Boheme" at the Dell in Toronto, and in Saint John recently, he was heard as Don Jose in Carmen. As actor, he has

appeared in "Butterflies are Free", "Hamlet" and "Twelfth Night", and for the Charlottetown Festival in "Mary, Queen of Scots" and "Jane Eyre".

A Halifax favourite, Jack Medley, returns directly from a holiday in England, following engagements in "What the Butler Saw" for Hamilton Playhouse and John Wood's production of "Adam's Fall" at Festival Lennoxville. Jack will long be remembered for several of Neptune's past joys - an hilarious "Charley's Aunt", a moving "Man for All Seasons" and in Noel Coward's "Private Lives".

Four members of the "GODSPELL" company have been signed up for "PINOCCHIO" - Jonathan Welsh, Iris Lyn Angus of Amherst, Muggsy Sweeny of Digby County and Paul Davis of Halifax.

Tickers for "THE ADVENTURES OF PINOCCHIO" are now on sale at the central box office of the Dalhousie Arts Centre - 424-2298. Neptune Theatre subscribers should also contact the central box office to exchange their vouchers for seating in the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium.



- Photo by Arthur McKay -

MICHAEL BURGESS as PINOCCHIO JONATHAN WELSH as CRICKET