

# Studio Theatre experiments: Holy Ghost spirited production

Suds scatter far and wide this week as Studio Theatre presents the world premiere of Wilfred Watson's psychedelic saga of the Sunflower family. Under the direction of Thomas Peacocke, *O Holy Ghost DIP YOUR FINGER IN THE BLOOD OF CANADA and write, I LOVE You* is given the totally contemporary performance it deserves by a cast of nine students from the Department of Drama.

The actors display a rare combination of youthful sensibilities with unexpectedly mature performances—a combination very necessary to a play which includes characters from "tribal man" to Ariadne, a symbolic Jason, Sappho, the war generation, and the hippies.

The play itself is an experimental mixture of word-plays, shifting actions, digressions and elaborations, and moments of pathos. Moments of brilliancy are present: the "nail-in", the funeral of Richard Sunflower, the transplant of newspaper eyeballs, and the hanging of Sappho are typical of those scenes which carried the production.

The scenes of quiet intensity such as the Jack Buttrey arrest and the speech of the Vietnamese prostitute exemplify the message of the play. At other times, the burlesque and the pun rule, serving to explicate other perhaps more confusing aspects of the same problems.

Here I think one must question the value of local references in plays. I doubt that the worn-out jokes about Social Credit and the Edmonton Journal provoke anything but mechanical laughter. But when Watson employs local incidents as metaphor, his talent

shows. Thus the "mass" at which the frocked and uniformed priest/R.C.M.P. officer arrests Buttrey on his way to Calgary (a reference to an actual incident of last spring) is one of the most moving scenes in the play.

Watson often achieves this brilliancy of conception and imagery. Unfortunately, the moments between such scenes tend to lag; the visual seems to be sacrificed to the intellectual; or, just as frequently, excessive movement turns all to confusion.

A large part of the production's experimentation lies with Designer Len Feldman. His stage, jutting into the audience, is unique and, I think, successful in that it does force audience participation. Costumes and props are not only functional but contribute in significant ways by their colours and forms to the play.

The stage itself is surrounded by eight screens on which images underlining the action of the play are flashed. Here the production fails. Ten times as many projections at twenty times the speed are needed. As the play stands, the projections are a static and useless appendage. The same frugality in the use of music also mars the effect.

The play is not an unqualified success, but it is bold and it does attempt to deal with today's issues. For these reasons, it deserves attention.

*O Holy Ghost* . . . continues at Studio Theatre tonight and tomorrow. It stars Alex Diakun, Jay Smith, Paul Letourneau, Elmer Hohol, Catherine Jackson, Nella Versloot, Linda Kupecek, Nancy Beatty, and Carole Harmon.

—Shirley Swartz

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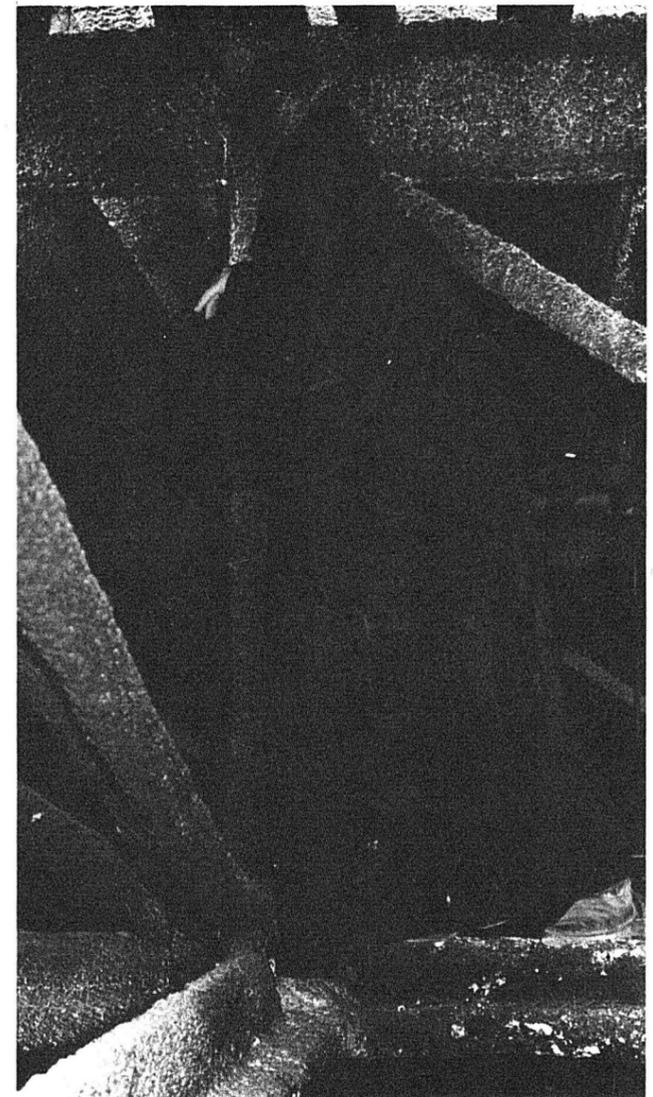
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## leftovers

### At last!

After placing photographers in strategic areas of the building and waiting up all hours of the night, we have succeeded in taking a picture of the Phantom. Forrest Bard took this picture of the culprit on the catwalks high over the Theatre at 3:00 a.m. last Tuesday.

Asked about his experience, Mr. Bard said, "It was terrible. I caught a glimpse of the monster's



visage just before he turned and fled to gloomy recesses where I dared not follow."

However, Mr. Bard managed to take a picture just before he swooned dead away, and it is herewith presented for the first time anywhere. Eat your heart out, Life magazine!

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Within memory, the name of the University of Alberta literary magazine has changed names many times—"Stet", "March", "Inside", "Pulpinside"—and now, ANTENNAE.

The name arises from Ezra Pound's famous dictum that "poets are the antennae of the race". The title was changed as an economy measure—it has fewer letters, and hence costs less, so that the magazine can get along on its newly diminished budget.

But don't be frightened if you don't write poetry—ANTENNAE is also looking for short stories, plays, essays, comments, and mostly etc. . . .

The place is Room 232 of SUB, anytime you want to leave your efforts for the editors' perusal.

Literati of the world, unite!

\* \* \*

NEXT WEEK—Watch for the gala Color Christmas Casserole, with four pages of photographs in full color.