



by Michael Edwards
Brunswickan Entertainment

Don't get me wrong - I really do like *The X-Files*. It's just that the show seems to be slipping into a formula that makes it rather obvious to guess what is going to happen. Put it this way - if there is a new show tonight, the following will probably happen:

There will be a murder by some kind of strange, perhaps mythical animal. If a 'new' plot twist is needed, the creature may in fact be invisible, or some kind of mutated human.

Next, our heroes Mulder and Scully will turn up on the scene to investigate - local police will be stumped, but Mulder will have some kind of idea about what has happened. And you can be damned sure that Scully won't believe him; she'll even have her own rational explanation for it.

For the next forty-five minutes, the killing and general weirdness will continue until the terrific twosome witness the mysterious organism in action. Not only does this confirm what Mulder was saying all along; it even convinces Scully that strange stuff happens.

The action continues to build at a fast and furious pace, probably involving a chase, until there is a confrontation between what could be called good and evil.

Now there are two options. First, the creature(s) escape and we never know what really happens. Or else, they manage to kill it, but when they try to 'gather' the evidence, some shadowy, lurking person gets in the way and the massive Governmental conspiracy and defaulted back to non-believing again.

Fortunately, the truth is out there, and good will eventually triumph over evil. But by the time next week rolls around, they'll be back to square one again, and Scully will have forgotten that she eye-witnessed all that weirdness and defaulted back to non-believing again. Sigh. And all that from a woman who was abducted by aliens...

(I can even do a plot synopsis for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* too - something weird appears in space, nobody has any idea what to do for forty-five minutes and then Data saves the day with a few seconds to spare before the inevitable explosion - engage engines and live another day. Yawn.)

Do I sound cynical? Sigh. I'm sorry about that - I'm just fed up with these boring episodes that I have to put up with until a decent one happens. I get the feeling that the show is just taking itself too seriously these days - it's beginning to believe its own press. The best episode in ages was the one about the psychics - there was an old guy who could see how people were going to die. Nothing out of the ordinary there.

But the good thing about this episode was that it had a sense of humour - lots of jokes about how silly the whole thing had gotten. A parody, if you like. Then last week we were back to ancient curses where people were torn to shreds by cats possessed by Satan. Or something like that. Yawn.

The other really good episodes are the ones where there is a continuing storyline - the kind that only happen at the beginning and the end of a season. Anything involving crashed UFO's, alien abductions and government conspiracies are always going to be popular. But therein lies yet another problem - they have already used all the really good storylines. I mean, after a massive government conspiracy where we find out that they have data files on everyone and have been carrying out alien DNA transplants on children for years and years, where do you go? Sewer cats possessed by Satan? Exactly.

So it seems to me that *The X-Files* have more or less blown it. If they stop now, they might be able to keep some of their dignity. But they won't. And why should they - the ratings are just beginning to increase now, and the merchandise licenses have just been sold. It will keep going for a few more years, and I will find myself continuing to watch it. After all, what else is there to do in Fredericton on a Friday night? Exactly.

The Masque Of The Four Seasons

by Eddi Laechswarm
Brunswickan Entertainment

If your idea of an evening of Elizabethan entertainment includes dance, you would have been somewhat disappointed by The Toronto Consort's performance of *The Masque Of The Four Seasons* as part of the UNB and STU's *Creative Arts* series. But probably no more disappointed than quite a few of the audience who expected the very talented dancer Veronica Tennant to perform on stage. Unfortunately she was suffering from a herniated disc and was unable to travel to Fredericton, so her place was taken by Beth Ann Cole. I do realise that these things happen, but maybe if we were made aware of this change in advance, the disappointment might not have been so great.

A masque, we were informed, was a form of entertainment which was favoured by English monarchs from Henry VIII to Charles I. It consisted of music, poetry, dance and spectacle which was usually connected by a theme; in this case, the four seasons. The programme was divided, not surprisingly, into Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring, and each season was explored through mainly song and poems written by a variety of authors of the time, including the likes of Raleigh, Morley and, inevitably, Shakespeare. These were performed with gusto, and once accustomed to the 'Olde' English tongue, it become possible to enjoy

the beauty of the compositions and, indeed, the language. The musical accompaniment came from instruments of the time, namely the lute and the recorder, and the performances of Terry McKenna and Alison Melville were one of the highlights of the entire evening.

The English have never been known for their subtle sense of humour (do I need to say any more than Benny Hill?), and so most of the humour in the performance was of a bawdy nature, and about as subtle as a brick. It was also rather funny. No complaint there. When things did go awry, it was when the members of the cast took it upon themselves to try to use a fake English accent, the likes of which has not been seen since Dick Van Dyke in *Mary Poppins*. But as I mentioned earlier, the English are not really known for their subtlety.

But my main criticism of the evening is that the performance was visually, well, boring. After a customary glance over the elaborate costumes, there wasn't much else to look at. What little dance there was involved a lot of walking very slowly by Ms. Cole, and some more energetic dancing by Christopher Carley. But there just wasn't enough of it. Maybe if Ms. Tennant had been able to appear things would have been different, but we'll just never know. Nevertheless, it was an enjoyable evening, and most definitely one of the more unusual nights of theatre I have attended.

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