

Entertainment

"Pescau."
—Anonymous—

Cultural dissection

Andrew C. Rowsome

The Ecstasy of Rita Joe is a difficult play to write about. It so blatantly implicates the audience in Rita Joe's degradation and death that to speak critically of it seems in bad taste. Yet there are several problems with the play itself. The characters bounce uneasily from pidgin Hollywood 'injun' to attempts at the Reader's Digest's "Quotable Quotes". This is further hampered in York's production by a tragic lack of momentum.

Beautifully choreographed group scenes dissolve into pedantic monologues in which the actors, whether major or minor, step forward to centre stage and declaim directly into the audience. The only performer who manages to break these dead spaces is Neil Black in a beautiful speech. With merely a suggestion of hand gestures the life cycle of a dragonfly is evoked and holds the audience raptly despite the neighbouring histrionics of Don Stroud.

Kelita Haverland is a tough, hard Rita Joe yet we still believe that 'white geese' would run after her.

A fine supporting cast etches several nice caricatures who were allowed to breathe between speeches. Although Diane Sokoluk has a terrific voice her actual function was unclear. Certainly the intended satirical edge was evident nowhere other than in the program notes. Images of the drunken Indians, the strutting policeman, the drive-in and the thunderstorm remain clear in my mind long after the actual words and phrases of the speeches have dissipated.



Byron Johnson

The three rapists quickly establish a definite aura of menace. Sadly, because of the stop-and-go pacing, the quick, violent rape scene becomes a tidy way of ending rather than an emotional climax.

As a play with a message, **Rita Joe** is thought-provoking. The plight of the Canadian Indian is presented unflinchingly and loudly. I doubt that one could leave after the funeral scene without at least a twinge of guilt

sorrow. Rita Joe dragging furiously on a tiny cigarette in a jail cell while asking what it is like outside has a lot to say about our own alienation from our country; her relationships touch on feminist ideals; her dealings with Father Andrew toy with the notions of Christianity. Another production at some time will undoubtedly endeavour to universalize **Rita Joe** so that she becomes a glowing symbol rather than a dissected example.

Katherine the great

Mike Fisher

Katherine Moses—flute player, saxophonist, vocalist—will never make the cover of *Rolling Stone*. She doesn't care. Neither did the small, attentive audience who crowded comfortably into Bethune's fireplace lounge for a Wednesday afternoon of unhurried and innovative jazz.

Moses, gaunt and bird-like in black, introduced herself beneath the dull glare of fluorescent lights as if she were speaking in a candlelit nightclub. "For those of you who get up in the morning," she began, and the audience laughed. Jazz was invented for the night, they knew it. But Moses and the three

from Blood, Sweat and Tears, accomplished the kind of solos that slide up the spine and linger in the mind long after leaving the concert. And drummer Joe Bendsza kept everything in order as he moved them sometimes slowly, sometimes swiftly along.

The star, however, was Moses. She moved through songs as if they were emotional territories, segueing from the coffee-jitter rhythm of jazz instrumentals into the slow, drunken sway of 'he

done left me' ballads. Moses claims that all music, from classical to country, has influenced her. She describes her own style of jazz as "having a good time"—this was evident in her performance. Moses and her band worked like different pedals of the same bicycle, each pushing the other forward in what became a musical joyride. Their next stop is at the Red Lion during the week of March third. It's worth the trip.

'60s tease

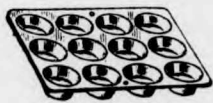
Abbie Edelson

The sixties returned to York Saturday night, as **Night Owl** filled the grad pub with an assortment of Dylan, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, Baez, and other songs. Including some original tunes ("Owl Overture," "Reunion," and "Lullaby") written and composed by group member Mark Freedman, **Night Owl** performed a fine mixture of guitar, vocal, percussion, highlighted by violin and recorder.

Robyn Ekstein's performance of Blind Faith's "Can't Find My Way Home" displayed the rich and deep quality of her voice. A packed grad pub audience watched **Night Owl** play a folk-rock style of music with tremendous energy. They demonstrated their ability to play as a cohesive group with much attention paid to dynamics, as

they modulated their sound for each other's instrumental and vocal solos. Their violinist and recorder player sustained high melodies with vibrato and precise intonation which added an interesting dimension to the guitars and vocals. His performance of Paul Simon's "Duncan" brought attention to the soprano recorder's soothing pitch.

A newly-formed group with one benefit concert behind them at the CNIB, **Night Owl** is a tight group, with interesting harmony. They radiate a positive, strong feeling for their music, able to move even a Saturday night pub audience. Sponsored by the Jewish Student Federation, **Night Owl**'s performance and reception demonstrates that there is an audience for folk music. They will be appearing at York in the near future.



competent musicians who accompanied her proved that good jazz—music played with a sense of commitment and risk—is enjoyable anytime, anywhere.

Moses has played at York before, and apparently feels at home here. The mutual respect between musicians and audience (many in the audience were musicians themselves), seemed almost cozy. The guitarist, Lorne Lofsky, who teaches in York's music program, provided the texture of most of the music with a relaxed, almost shuffle-style which nonetheless retained an exciting edge during the instrumentals. Electric bassist David Pilch, reportedly on loan

Music

John Cale's new record **Sabotage Live** may become his most successful music to date. Cale has been around since the old Velvet Underground days, where he mined the roots of rock along with the infamous Louis Reed. Cale's past album including **Helen of Troy**, **Guts** and **Slow Dazzle** featured many interesting musicians, and this disc is no exception. "Mercenaries (Ready for War)" is a perfect opener, leaving this reviewer speechless. Cale's piano, bass, guitar, and viola run rampant throughout reflecting the anger in such cuts as "Walkin' the Dog" and "Sabotage." Others like "Evidence" and "Captain Hook" show the prominent work of guitarist Marc Aaron. A welcome change in Cale's new repertoire is a folk-like ballad entitled "Only Time Will Tell." Cale has delivered another strong effort, in concert he is even better.

Danny Goldberger

Off York

Theatre

How best to bring Shakespeare to North American children? Judging from the bewildered looks and bored faces in the Young People's Theatre last Sunday, apparently not with **Twelfth Night**. Despite exceptionally good acting and directing, the young thespians seemed baffled by the intricate plot and Shakespearean sleight-of-tongues. Only the slapstick seemed to divert eyes to the stage.

For adults, however, it was a different matter. Rarely do Toronto theatres have actors the quality of Alan Scarfe, Paula Schappert or Christopher Newton, a director such as John Hirsch and a set, designed by Michael Eagan. The result is good, if slightly exaggerated, acting in a tight, quick-paced production with an imaginative and elegant set. On till March 2.

Mark Monfette

Derek Walcott's **The Joker of Seville** is a sprightly musical-comedy based on the bawdy exploits of Don Juan Tenorio. Presently showing at Hart House Theatre, the play features a musical score written by Galt MacDermot (**Hair**). At a little over three hours, the score tends to be listless in places, primarily due to its length.

The wit and precision of Walcott's script, however, have to be heard to be fully realized. Depicting the parody of Spanish romantic chivalry, the cast performs adequately with Harold Burke as a wisened old actor and Peter Van Wart as the ribald Don Juan Tenorio highlighting the performance.

The production runs from Feb. 13-16.

John Boudreau



Film

The recent Hungarian film platter, organized by the people behind the Festival Cinema, demonstrated the work of a first-rate, progressive industry. **The Hungarians**, **A Quite Ordinary Life**, and **Angi Vera** were personal favourites. **Angi** (un-gee) **Vera**, the most accessible of the group, is now running at the Fine Arts Cinema. Directed by Pal Gabor, this stylish women's rights film details the struggle of a poor working girl coping with the indoctrination of communism in mid-forties Hungary. The first ten minutes has her bravely renouncing the poverty and miserable conditions around her. The rest of the film details her awakening both politically and as a woman. If you thought that a Hungarian film could not be erotic you must see **Angi Vera**. A surprise awaits.

Lefko Elliott

Neil Simon's **Chapter Two** concerns itself with love, marriage, divorce, and death, although not necessarily in that order. James Caan is a lovable widower who meets Marsha Mason, a recent divorcee. Against their better judgment, they fall in love, and get married faster than one rents a tuxedo. As expected, memories of Caan's dead wife intervene and we have a dramatic conflict. The film keeps one's interest throughout, and the two leads give fine, sensitive performances. There is an abundance of crisp, witty dialogue, supplemented with intense true-to-life arguments. It all inevitably leads to one more of those crafty Neil Simon happy endings. (Yawn).

Richard Zywockiewicz