



AGYU

Excalibur - Tim Clark

Just opened, the Art Gallery of York University has an impressive collection of work by the Fine Arts faculty. Wander down to N145, Ross Bldg., and take a look, or two, or three.

## Dionysus in '70 is recreated

By BRIAN PEARL

Dionysus was born again in the Studio Lab Theatre on Queen Street last Saturday. Ernie Schwartz's fantastic production of Dionysus in '69, by now a classic example of Living Theatre, has been renewed as Dionysus in '70 and will be running until November 29. The play has been adjusted finely to give it greater depth and sharper contrasts. Basically, Schwartz has improved the involving theatre games and de-emphasized the literal, self-important plot based on Euripedes' The Bacchae.

The admix of a classical Greek play and the theatre techniques of sensory and image games played with the audience developed by the La Mama Company of New York in 1968 has never failed to stimulate some excitement in an audience at

Studio Lab. The combination of Euripedes' brilliant play on the battle between human reason and human passion and the sensitive cast leading the audience in a series of highly active games which turn the whole crowd into a real group always reaches some part of my head.

The show is an organic thing and is perfectly capable of growing and improving, as the renewed production shows. The cast has become very much better at leading the group in their games of rhythm stimulation and bestial simulation. In the former, the group cast and audience, comes to the stage and begins to dance, making up their own rhythms and dances. How we all reach a new beat together is a tremendous and wonderful mystery. The beat seems to grow among us until the entire group is dancing to the new rhythm and improvisation from the heart of the group leads to a new beat. It is ecstasy; dramatic, mythic and religious ecstasy recreated in the theatre.

The second game I'll call

'beasties' because we all become snarling beasts. The cast moves among the crowd snarling and gesturing menacingly, sometimes playfully and receiving responses in like manner until a group of beasties is formed. One wolf came at my date, I accepted the challenge and adopting the appropriate defensive postures and mannerisms escorted him away from my mate firmly. This game didn't get far as it could have that night, but the possibilities are staggering for an intensive group thing on the stage.

In the more conventional aspects of the theatre, Dionysus in '70 is a confident, well-planned production. The set is a series of gradually rising hillocks of wooden boxes that circle a large floor space centering on a round, red rug illuminated by a circle of dim light bulbs suspended from the ceiling. The entire theatre is a vortex. The audience is drawn physically towards the play-ground, the centre floor space. The random piles of boxes resemble rolling hills on another scale, and the

naturalism of the set is quite remarkable. Don and Mary Kerr have improved the setting brilliantly.

De-emphasizing the plot seems to have caused the biggest problem. Familiarity with the story is not necessary, but it does seem necessary if the significance of the plot is to become clear. The biggest change is the ending. Last year, Dionysus harangued the crowd from the scaffolding, prophesying doom for everyone there.

This year, the ending is less dramatic, (or at least it seemed that way Saturday) but easier to appreciate. The cast, Euripedes' chorus playing the people of Thebes, wander aimlessly among the group, making senseless sounds and unable to touch anyone. Meaning and action are dead, passion and desire are dead; the dying zombies circulate among us while Dionysus stretches out on a beach towel, smoking a corona cigar, lording it over the populace that dared to deny him his due.

If you see Dionysus in '70, (and if you haven't, you ought to; if you go early, the mood is perfectly built by the cast in the role of highly personal ushers during the half hour before the play actually starts. The very reasonable student price is two dollars and fifty cents (only a quarter more than a film for a whole universe of sensations).



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Queenie before the Stones mellow somewhat and really get into Love in Vain and Midnight Rambler.

Live With Me is typical of the way in which the Rolling Stones cut right through the false sentimentality of pop romanticism. It is also typical of the non-obscured realities of today's society that Mick and the boys continue to mock you with. So, if you decide to really hear it like it is, then you too will probably get your ya-ya's out!

**Uriah Heep**

(Mercury SR - 01294)

This is the first album of the new British pop group Uriah Heep. It is a weak attempt at a heavy fusion of rock and mellotron induced medieval harmonies. Uriah Heep is inconsistent in their programme and can't quite bridge the gap between traditional tunes such as Come Away Melinda and their new ideas which are presented under the haunting premise of cuts such as Bird of Prey. The album comes through as being a competition of distantly related and terribly structured noise.

**Grand Funk Railroad - Closer to Home**

Grand Funk are a group which made it on quality and their latest album, Closer to Home, is a pretty fair indication of what makes them so damn good. It presents a foundation of some of their earlier work, but the striking feature of the album is their noticeable musical maturity. Grand Funk have applied their blues premise to some of the problems of today's modern youth culture. They have also introduced some fine keyboard work which is appreciably noticeable in cuts such as Mark Farner's Get It Together. The nine minutes and forty-seven seconds of I'm Your Captain is more than enough evidence of the abilities and perhaps new trend of Grand Funk Railroad.

**The Band - Stage Fright (Capitol SW - 425)**

This is the long awaited third album by The Band and is not only their worst effort but is a disappointing record in general. Musically, The Band have shifted their emphasis to encompass a larger rock scope. Lyrically the songs of Stage Fright are not drastically dissimilar to previous Band themes, however the album seems to lack the absolute honesty and dedication evident in their previous two albums. There are some redeeming features in The Shape I'm In and Daniel And The Sacred Harp but these are not enough to pull Stage Fright up to the level of quality displayed in the past.

— Steve Geller

**Crowbar**

(Capitol SKAO - 471)

We might miss Crowbar through lack of attention to the Band style. Crowbar is linked to the Band by the hand of the same master: Rompin' Ronnie Hawkins. Besides being brilliant about music, Hawkins is a perfectionist who drills his groups for months in the crummiest joints to teach them how to perform. From what I hear, Crowbar, like the Band, parted company on good terms, simply anxious to follow their own road.

Their own road is somewhat different from that of the inimitable Band. They sing the blues. And they do it well, as good as Canned Heat at their best. Their blues swings with the driving sound of strong rhythm.

At the helm is King Biscuit Boy who plays one of the meanest harps around, as well as a good slide guitar. He's backed by a strong rhythm section that keeps simple except for some smooth organ and piano.

What else is nice is the Canadian flavour. It's nice to hear in "Biscuit's Boogie" a blues story that has a Toronto setting. It's friendlier.

— Lloyd Chesley

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