

ARTS

Pie in the face for wholesomeness

Shock Treatment
Uptown Cinema (Calgary)

review by Geoffrey Jackson

Finally, after living for years on the royalties from the *Rocky Horror Show*, Richard O'Brian has come out with another piece of tuneful lunacy. Once again he has succeeded in creating a giddy satirical film full of fun songs and bizarre people. While this movie is being promoted as a sequel to the *Rocky Horror Show* it isn't really, although it does bring back Brad and Janet, the naive, apple pie couple so thoroughly debauched in the *Rocky Horror Show*.

While *Rocky Horror* satirized S.F. movies, horror flicks, and sex, *Shock Treatment* takes on T.V. and small town hypocrisy as its main targets. The action takes place entirely upon the soundstage of a glossy T.V. station in Denton (The Home of Happiness) U.S.A. Denton is so wholesome it would repulse Pat Boone.

But strange things are happening in Denton. The local boy millionaire, Farley, owner of Farley's Fabulous Fast Foods, is exercising his power to win Wholesome Janet from her wimpy husband Brad. Involved in this plot are Burt Schnick, the Blind German Gameshow Host, and the brother/sister team Cosmo and Nation McKinley, and the bizarre M.D.s on the new hospital soap opera, 'Dentonville.'

Richard O'Brian has returned to his

favorite themes in this movie: the corruption of innocence (what fun that can be!) and the banality of middle class morality. Throughout all of his there is his sharp eye for the weird and wonderful in our culture. He seems to say that decadence may be decadent but it also can be quite a giggle.

Janet is very well played by Jessica Harper, who goes from an "aw-shucks" girl-next-door to a sexy hell-raiser with a great deal of flair. Brad and Farley are double roles, both being played by Cliff DeYoung. He does such a nice job of differentiating between the schmuck Brad and the flashy Farley that I didn't realize they were being played by the same actor till halfway through the film. Of course Richard O'Brian and Patricia Quinn are the mad McKinley doctors, recreating the chemistry of Riff Raff and Magenta in the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Visually the film is a treat, full of gaudy colour and giddy editing. The musical numbers are a joy with clever tuneful songs. My favorite was the song, "Looking for Trade" that Jessica Harper clips off with lots of sultry disdain.

Will this film be another *Rocky Horror Show*, the cult film of the 70s? Cult films are hard things to predict. *Shock Treatment* does lack a character as magnetic as Tim Currie's Dr. Frankfurter. Still, it is a rewarding film and I think that people will go back to see this film more than once.



This gentleman is Czeslaw Milosz, 1980 Nobel Laureate in Literature. He will be visiting the U of A today. At 2:00 p.m. he will open a commemorative exhibition in Library Hall in Rutherford Library and autograph pre-purchased books. At 6:15 he will sign autographs again at Convocation Hall, and at 7:00 he will read from his poetry there in Polish and English. At 9:00 there will be a gala farewell dinner at the Faculty Club; price - \$18.00 per person (holy Polski ogorki!) which I'll bet will make even members of the Polish-Canadian Academic and Businessman's Club wince.

The Arts Editor's line is that the Nobel Prize is not a credit to Milosz, but a blemish on his reputation; that any self-respecting litterateur should refuse all prizes and awards on the grounds that acceptance is a tacit admission that people and organizations other than the author himself can set literary standards. My hero is thus the Sinclair Lewis who told the Pulitzer Prize Committee what they could do with their award, and my sworn enemy is the Sinclair Lewis who later accepted the Nobel Prize (and per corollary all those impressionable writers like Lewis and Milosz who accept the authority of prize committees, and are tickled by the status they bestow).

The Milosz poem below, in my opinion, is a thinly disguised appeal for a return to Victorian prudery in art, which further damages his credibility. There are, of course, many convincing arguments for such a retreat. Punk rock immediately springs to mind as does "Let My People Come" and Tom and Harold Robbins. But let us not forget that there are also genuine artists specializing in frankness about life — the Theodore Dreisers, Lenny Bruces and Robert Crumbs of the world — who would be flushed down the pipes at the same time, since no censorship authority has ever existed which was capable of separating these artists from the frauds. And anything less than censorship is simply futile sermonizing.

Milosz would do better to abandon his jeremiads against indelicacy and write something refreshingly indelicate, say an expose on the general chauvinism and philistinism of ethnic cultural organizations, or an essay on what staggering bores professors are, especially those in the humanities. J.A.

ARS POETICA?

I have always aspired to a more spacious form that would be free from the claims of poetry or prose and would let us understand each other without exposing the author or reader to sublime agonies.

In the very essence of poetry there is something indecent: a thing is brought forth which we didn't know we had in us, so we blink our eyes, as if a tiger had sprung out and stood in the light, lashing his tail.

That's why poetry is rightly said to be dictated by a daimonion, though it's an exaggeration to maintain that he must be an angel. It's hard to guess where that pride of poets comes from, when so often they're put to shame by the disclosure of their frailty.

What reasonable man would like to be a city of demons, who behave as if they were at home, speak in many tongues, and who, not satisfied with stealing his lips or hand, work at changing his destiny for their convenience?

It's true that what is morbid is highly valued today, and so you may think that I am only joking or that I've devised just one more means of praising Art with the help of irony.

There was a time when only wise books were read helping us to bear our pain and misery. This, after all, is not quite the same as leafing through a thousand works fresh from psychiatric clinics.

And yet the world is different from what it seems to be and we are other than how we see ourselves in our ravings. People therefore preserve silent integrity thus earning the respect of their relatives and neighbors.

The purpose of poetry is to remind us how difficult it is to remain just one person, for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors, and invisible guests come in and out at will.

What I'm saying here is not, I agree, poetry, as poems should be written rarely and reluctantly, under unbearable duress and only with the hope that good spirits, not evil ones, choose us for their instrument.

Freed wows 'em

John Freed
Orange Hall
September 12

review by Jens Andersen

There was standing room only at the Southside Orange Hall Saturday night when he Edmonton Folk Music Club brought in Don Freed (this reviewer was one of the standing; not having had the presence of mind to buy a ticket beforehand).



graphic Dave Geary

ly noteworthy. The only problem with the song, indeed, is its infernal catchiness: once you have heard the damn thing it is just about impossible to get it out of your head again.

Also superlative were "On the Trail of the Festival" and "Poster Squad," with tunes borrowed from Woody Guthrie and Henry Mancini respectively. The songs deal poignantly with the occupational hazards of being a musician (e.g. inedible festival food, stoned sound men, and getting fined for posting concert notices). Freed has the knack for writing interesting songs about commonplace incidents like these. This year's strikes, Edmonton restaurants, a tour of England, and even Washington, DC. managed to inspire one.

And unlike many folk singers, for instance the nondescript fellow who opened the concert, Freed takes pains to make his compositions musically interesting, rather than just words-and-chord-strumming.

Nor should we overlook "Wheelbarrow," or "I'm from the West and I Don't Know Nuthin," or his rousing duet with Tammy Wynette alias "Ma" Fletcher, or the dark, moody closing number with its ironic line about showing the positive.

In fact the only thing missing from the concert was his "Polka in Ponoka" (or Topeka, or whatever the title was to the song where he is looking for a girl who smokes and swears, smokes and swears, smokes and swears — doesn't it make you want to dance just to read the lines?) It was my favorite song from his set at the folk fest and its absence was felt.

The Orange Hall concert was taped and some of the songs will appear on Freed's upcoming album, including the closing number and a studio version of "Uranium," if I remember rightly.

I, for one, am looking forward to it. I suspect a few of Saturday night's audience are too.

The concert more than made up for the sore feet and tired legs. The worst that could be said of Freed's two long sets is that some of his songs verged on the ordinary, and the humor of "Nothing but a Cat" doesn't stand up to repeated listenings.

"Uranium," however, (a catchy little number about Saskatchewan's hottest export) sounded as fine as it did at this summer's folk festival. The lyricism of the "eh-eh-eh-eh-eh-eh" chorus is special-