

## Woyzeck striking

Woyzeck, by Georg Buchner  
 Merdale Theatre  
 January 13-22

Dave Cox

The most striking feature of Walter's production of Woyzeck was that it was done in mask.

The next most striking feature was the play's fragmentary construction, which is both confusing and tantalizing.

Both these features and the way director Hafiz Karmali dealt with them served to heighten the play's dramatic impact.

The use of masks served to bring out the frightening and almost absurd inhumanity of most characters. By contrast it was Woyzeck, Marie, their son Christian, and Karl the Idiot (all played without masks) who were the more human and sympathetic. Designer Robyn Ayles deserves praise for her use of masks, and the sets.

Excellent performances were given by Greg Colman as Franz Woyzeck, Arne MacPherson as Karl, and George Highsmith as the Doctor.

Quite highly commendable also were Brian Blayney as Marie, Rainer Krapf as the Drum Major, and Peter McNab as the Captain.

I also personally enjoyed Claudio Masciulli's part as the Second Apprentice.

The play is, to borrow an image, as if illuminated by flashes of lightning. Its incompleteness—Buchner died at twenty-three before completing it—makes it stark, minimalist and irresistible.

Director Karmali must have been pressed to assemble the fragments of the play in such a fashion as to accurately create a unique impact.

Buchner was a fascinating and ingenious character himself. He died of typhus in 1837, after being declared an enemy of the state: "He perceived in history a tyrannical shaping force on human behaviour", and once stated, "I find in human nature a terrifying sameness."

The director's message says, "Georg Buchner perceived no systems or categories by which to make sense of the world. To him, the world was full of threatening contradictions."

This play manages to capture some of the undercurrents of life, trying to pull us down.

Now why do I feel so woyzeckian?

# the b-sides

by Nate LaRoi

"Welcome. How're you doing? We're the B-Sides from Vancouver. Do you like dancing?" Five or six hundred cabaret goers answered that one strongly in the affirmative Friday night, turning Dinwoodie into a paradise for the feet.

With a skinny lead singer whose clean cut looks and schoolboy jacket bring to mind Richie Cunningham and with a lead guitarist whose slicked-back hair and dark glasses bring to mind Roy Orbison, the B-Sides didn't exactly look like the kind of band that could get the place jumping.

My doubts began to give way as the music started. With singer Bobby Blue Herron waving his arms and bending his knees a bit with keyboardist Ryszard Osimek swaying from side to side as he played, the B-Sides opened the show riled up and full of energy. By the end of the first set the

band was flying right along and the dance floor was packed. Behind Bob Walker's spirited sax, Dano 5-0's guitar and Ryszard Osimek's Farfisa-style keyboards, the B-Sides dished out fast ska and slow reggae that made for ideal dance music.

The band evidently does not want to be labeled as just ska and reggae, however, for they were careful to throw in liberal amounts of jazz and R&B. The band's cover of the sixties classic 'Black is Black' was most impressive, as was the jazzy instrumental 'B Side Shuffle', which they dedicated to campus radio CJSR, the only station in town that actually plays them.

Between the seven of them, the B-Sides produced a sound so full and energetic that it made *Red to Black* seem think, almost lifeless in comparison. At times, the wall of sound began to overpower itself, a couple numbers collapsing

into wars between guitar and sax and keyboards.

Aside from that and a few technical difficulties (the feedback on 'Red to Black', the mix on the first couple numbers) I had very few complaints about the show.

My only worry was that they weren't going to play my favorite B-Sides tune, 'Bedtime for Ronald'. My worries were unfounded, however, as they were simply saving the best for last. "We're going to keep playing this one till Ronnie is out of the White House," Bobby Blue quipped, before breaking into the goofy sing-a-long that closed the show.

If you're looking for Canada's answer to the English Beat (or to the Specials or to Madness or to...), the B-Sides are probably about as close as you're going to come. The group is very tight and very energetic and the beat is as snappy as it is danceable.

"This band is just incredible," one young lady suggested. "They're terrific," another added. I wasn't going to argue.

P.S. If you'd like to add some B-Sides to your record collection, I might suggest their initial EP over the album. The EP lacks Bob Walker's sax, unfortunately, but does feature some yet powerful reggae rhythms. It includes three excellent songs - 'Bedtime for Ronald', 'She's a Raver' and 'Underground Radio Stars'. If you can't find it, either try to order it or write Radioactive Records for a catalog: 2740 Alma Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6K-3S4.



## Toussaint intoxicating

Eddy Toussaint brought a little of his ballet magic Quebec-style to Edmonton last Friday night, and made many new friends.

The show had something for everyone's taste in dance in four entertaining numbers. It opened with *Missa Creolais*, a creole mass in dance, with an intoxicating caribbean background score. The dancers took a short while to get synchronized perfectly, but eventually came together well.

The performance was visually distinct and appealing. The corps have their own visual flair and a vivacious artistic wit.

*Un Simple Moment* is a duet so special, you want to hold your breath. Louis

Robitaille and Anik Bissonnette have an energetic interplay that builds to vibrant peaks.

The third number, called *Mascarade*, was a kind of comedy in dance set to Santa Esmeralda which the audience revelled in, especially the devil and the harlot.

Finally, *Rose Latulipe* was a fitting conclusion with a surprise ending. The middle seemed to drag a bit, and the music was harmoniously lulling me to sleep, but Louis Robitaille's performance as the devil jolted me awake again. He brings a true touch of the sinister to the part.

I heard that some dance impresarios had flown in all the way from Vancouver for this show. After seeing it, I know why.

## Jim Post ineffably witty, charming

by Margaret Baer

About 200 devoted folkies came to share in the charm and wit of the ineffable Jim Post last Thursday night at the Provincial Museum.

The two hour concert featured a mixture of old favourites and strong new material, from lyrical ballads to heavily strummed, lively tunes.

Though Post can most easily be described as a "folksinger-songwriter", he is a combination of music, drama, humor and a lot of energy. On stage, Post is incredibly honest, open and absolutely crazy, holding his audience captive with his unique voice, lyrics and melodies.

Post's 'international anthem', 'Back on the Street Again', got the crowd loose early, with everyone singing the familiar chorus.

This was followed by several good new songs, one of which was composed only two days previously. "First Tear on the Moon" combines a soft guitar accompaniment with a story about a woman astronaut on the moon shift. Post, a native of Texas, wrote the song about the Space Shuttle because it is "one of the few things about the U.S. that excites me; a lot of other things scare the shit out of me!"

Another new tune was his tribute to the legendary flat-picker, Doc Watson. The crowd appreciated Post's portrait of the great guitarist, as the song captured feelings shared by many about this contemporary folk/country hero.

Post closed off the first set with his satire on evangelism, "Walk on the Water". Jesus' disciples take a Sunday off to go fishing in the Sea of Galilee, taking with them their beer keg, suntan lotion and TV.

They see a man in the distance walking on the water, but they know that that is impossible ("Pierre Trudeau hasn't been born yet"). They recognize "Jeeee-zus" by his halo, and when one disciple walks on the water, too, the others think "he just knows where the rocks are too". To finish the song off, Post reminds us that Jesus loved the blues. Hmmm.

Post's hilarious anecdotes are as much a part of his performance as his songs. Typical was his reference to a San Francisco newspaper parody in which Nancy Reagan was said to be pregnant. Post quipped "Even the CIA doesn't know how to do THAT!"

The second set included several love songs, from the a capella "Trees in Love", where a weeping willow falls for a redwood (Forestry students would've loved it!), to the tender "Three Soft Touches", about Post's grandparents. He ended with a long favourite of his fans, "Rachel's Song".

Though joking upon his return for an encore, "I don't know anymore", Post chose to close with another "sensitive" song - "Brain Damage", his ode to LSD. Taking jabs at chemical preservatives, nuclear waste, and Alberta gas well blow-outs, Post reminded us of the perils of our modern industrial society — and the fact LSD may not be so crazy as all the crap we are all subjected to, most of the time unknowingly. In keeping with the satirical mood, he even treated the audience with a pretty good imitation of Bob Dylan.

Although Post said he was "out of it" on this particular night, the crowd did not leave disappointed. All in all, a good evening for folkies in mid-winter Edmonton.



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