

Olde Charlie Farquarson's testament of magic

by Rob Fadelle

Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I shall fear no evil. For I have seen the

glory of the Good Lord's story as told in Neptune Theatre's production of *Olde Charlie Farquarson's Testament and Magic Lantern Show*.

The story was originally published by Harron as *Old Charlie Farquarson's Testament* in 1978. Now rewritten by Don Harron and Frank Peppiatt, *Olde Charlie Farquarson's Testament and Magic Lantern Show* is a most refreshing and comical look at the Bible as interpreted by the Farquarson clan. The story takes place in a small Sunday school classroom in an equally small rural church, the kind one could find almost anywhere in rural Canada. At this point, however, all similarity with the typical small community gathering place must end.

The evening of tongue-in-

amongst the reams of other theatregoers. Upon finding our seats, we were treated to a taste of Bill Carr's stand-up repertoire, performed in the guise of Orville Farquarson in his Canadian theatrical debut. He made several playful jabs at the audience.

The story begins with the entry of the rest of the Farquarson clan: Charlie's wife, Valeda Drain Farquarson (Catherine McKinnon), Letitia Drain (Holly Arsenault, also the evening's musician), and last but not least, Charlie Farquarson, Don Harron himself. As he made his way on stage, Charlie carried a bible which looked as though it must

revealed as the "Magic Lantern". The illustrations used in the show are the work of Canada's own Lynn Johnston, creator of the comic strip "For Better or for Worse".

The Farquarson interpretation of the Bible began with the creation of the Earth, the plants and animals Man, Woman, and the Garden of Eden. The whole story of Genesis was told in the typical Farquarson way, replete with comic illustrations and input from the rest of the family, all of which had the audience constantly laughing. We saw Cain and Abel, Noah and the Ark ("watch where you step!"), and more, all humourously expressed through the use of some very comic lyrics.

Catherine McKinnon belted out the sexy number "Sodom is my Home", in character similar to that of a biblical Mae West.

One of the funnier songs was that of "The Ballad of Jacob and Esau", with the cast playing the parts of hippies, complete with '60s long hair, love beads, tambourines, and the festive herb. Harron and Carr were, of course, at their very best with this prop and took every opportunity to crack up the audience.

The story of Moses ("Moe-Ziz"), told in the song "The Ten Plagues of Moses", was done to the tune of "The Twelve Days of Christmas". It was a great oppor-

Genesis was retold with comic illustrations and family input

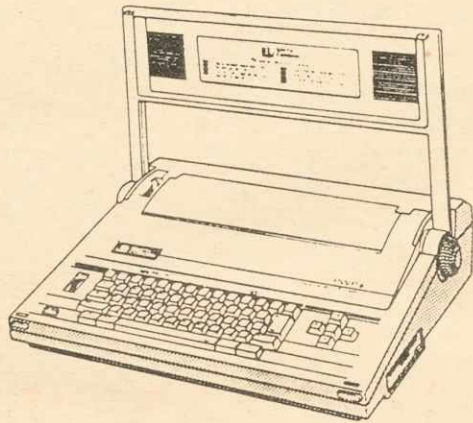
tunity for the props people to show what they were made of.

The voice of God was portrayed by a woman (Cathy O'Connell). Not only was that a revelation, but according to God, S/He is a Canadian. This would appear to make us the Chosen People. Also, in this story, God does not speak softly and carries a big hockey stick.

There were other tunes such as "Colonel Joshua's March", sung to the music of the "Colonel Bogey March" of *Bridge on the River Kwai* fame.

All in all, if you're looking for a really entertaining evening out, and if a very cavalier interpretation of Holy Scripture does not offend you, check our *Olde Charlie Farquarson's Testament and Magic Lantern Show*. If such a thing does offend you, "Go yell it up your mountain!"

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The Farquarson clan: (l. to r.) Catherine McKinnon, Bill Carr, Don Harron, and Holly Arsenault.

cheek jocularly began even before my guest and I had entered the theatre proper. While upstairs having a drink, we were surprised to hear laughter and applause down below. Worried that we might miss something, we quickly quaffed our drinks and set out to find our places

have weighed at least as much as he does. He placed the heavy tome on the podium and flipped it open with the appropriate cloud of dust.

At the back of the set was an old blackboard. At least that was the first impression. At the beginning of the story of creation, the blackboard was

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