



## editorial

### A question of needs

HUB is not the only example of areas of Student Union concern that proved to be financial burdens. In this case, our attempts in providing low-cost student housing as a service has almost ruined the financial structure of the Union, and we've still not solved the HUB crisis.

Another area that has proven unprofitable has been the concert promotion area. Two excellent reasons for discontinuing this non-service to students are the \$2,000 we lost in sponsoring Chilliwack during FIW, and the \$1,500 we lost bringing the Ian Tyson show to Edmonton.

Both shows were booked into the Jubilee Auditorium, and both shows drew a minimal crowd (300 and 900 respectively). Had circumstances been different, we stood a chance of not only breaking even, but of making money on these enterprises. Unfortunately things didn't turn out that way.

For instance, the Ian Tyson Show was in Edmonton the same same night an Ian Tyson television Special was aired on the tube. Why pay \$5.00 to see them live when you can see the same show at home free? And then there's the question of taste; is Ian Tyson the type of show the majority of students would care to see? Obviously not.

As far as Chilliwack is concerned, the reasons for that failure were different. The same group has been in Edmonton twice in the preceding eight months doing concerts, not as a main attraction, but as a warm-up show. We booked them as a main attraction in the Jubilee rather than in our own theatre, and we booked them two days prior to a very big name concert that undoubtedly drew the crowd we hoped to attract.

In analyzing the reasons behind these financial fiascos, it seems the quality of the act, the timing and location of the show, and the promotion of the show are the main reasons for the failures.

Perhaps in future we could adopt a system that would allow us to break even or profit from these ventures. Booking the small name acts into SUB Theatre rather than the Jubilee, consulting the calendar for conflicting concerts, and promoting acts that cater to a larger section of the student population might be considered before expending the money on the student's behalf.

If the value of services are judged on the numbers of students reached, these services have proved to be non-services. If inadequate promotion and poor planning are to be blamed for the failures, there is no reason for the Students' Union to abandon this area of services. But as it now stands, our only experiences are bad experiences, and the Students' Union treasury needs that \$3,500 more than the concert industry does.

Bernie Fritze

### Wargrave charges dramatic elite "up horse's ass"

When I first heard that *the Gateway* had received letters critical of my theatre reviews I was stunned and hurt. Up until now I had thought everyone was agreeing with my views because I of course know that anyone who had disagreed certainly would have been offended and energetic enough to write in. However may I say that I am truly thankful for some feedback of my reviews.

First of all, I would wish to attempt to fortify my credibility by considering my credentials as a critic as well as the views I have of the functions of a theatre critic. While as of yet I have not starred in a Broadway production, I have boogeyed through a number of literature and drama courses, workshops and production in various capacities. In reply to Mr. Davison, I believe I have missed one of each major Edmonton theatres' productions this year. Yet I do not believe that a critic must be some intellectual and professional giant who comes down like a sort of God to see how lesser dramatic efforts are being carried out. For after all, is not theatre supposed to be for people, not just for the 'in' drama people? Has theatre completely lost its early roots of having some fundamental significance to the average person and his daily life?

Perhaps my ideals are too high but I do believe that the theatre cannot continue to be a socially or humanly meaningful artistic force if it only has significance to a dramatic elite who believes it has God given knowledge to properly understand the theatre or who take the attitude that 'we are doing dramatic things and therefore it simply has to be good.' What about universal emotion and instinct?

Another point that I think should be considered is that while as a critic I do have a certain responsibility to be objective, I think that it is perhaps more important that I have my own set of criteria for judging productions. Critics have a tendency to use critical standards which have been received from comparatively un-objective dramatic elites and therefore do not inject a new viewpoint of theatre but rather preserve some wishy-washy and polite status quo. While not demented enough to believe I am John and Edith Wargrave's gift to the drama world, I think Edmonton theatre



circles will get more benefit from telling an Oliver escapee to go stuff himself than from a congenial pat on the back.

Consequently in reply to the letters (Mr. Proulx especially) I can, while considering libelous statements, call the New York Drama Critics horse's asses if I like. Yes I will admit to excessive sarcasm and lack of critical backup in my last review but when I view a production (not only for criticism) I base a lot of my comments on simply how I react to the play at some kind of gut and intuitive level.

During the *Hot L* I felt like Beckett's Estragon.

I was bored and had the suspicion that seemingly nothing of great concern to me was going to happen that night. I also had the feeling that I was going to be offered another pretentious night of instruction on what good theatre is and what life is 'really all about'. Perhaps there is simply here an irresolvable conflict of differing individual viewpoints. You know like black pots and kettles and the nymphomaniac calling the prostitute a whore but the way I figure it, if everyone starts identifying women's sexual divergencies, I will find it much easier to receive the attention I crave.

As for the *Hot L* more specifically, I realize that Studio Theatre is geared for the expansion of the abilities of fourth year B.F.A. students and that the choice of plays is not the sole decision of the director. Yet if a play is to be presented, I do believe that the preferences and desires of theatre goers could be considered a little more.

While my critics have found many to back up their positive opinions about the latest production I believe I could find sufficient numbers to take my more negative viewpoint. Different spokes? Different folks?

I must truly commend Messrs. Rutowski and Charles on their analysis of the possible more complex themes running throughout the play. However could that much be gleaned from one watching of Studio Theatre's production? Or did the *Hot L* attempt to jam too complex and lengthy themes for its artistic form? Or was it that Wargrave found Wilson's various symbolisms too subtle and discontinuous to provide stable and cohesive material to build upon an agreed weak plot? I'm as willing as any intelligent theatre goer to put a few things together and to dig around a bit, but not to China.

Perhaps my review did not convey the idea but I do agree with this duo's belief that any 'humanistic comic spirit of Wilson's work' will emanate from the character's personalities. Yet firstly I felt that Wilson's characters were stereotypical. Secondly I do not feel that Wilson's dramatic framework was that excitingly fresh to significantly show us about our insensitivity to the human condition as much as *The Iceman Cometh* might have shocked O'Neill's audience decades ago. If artists are to be considered as the movers and shakers of society, should not playwrights now be presenting something more than a questioning mirror of society? Newspapers do a pretty good job of reporting the ills of our society and do in some way imply the resulting individual suffering. Could not dramatists work out more enlightened overviews of society, if not some suggestion for solutions?

Finally and may I thank Mr. Proulx for diminishing some of my personal anxiety about space and time for I am pleased to see that there is someone who has finally discovered with some certainty the limits of infinity in the U of A drama department. May I also thank my two nursing aids, Little Pete and Big Bertha for finding my brain and getting it out of the cleaners so quickly.

From the center of my you know what, a respective adieu from Oliver Lawrence 'Cheeks' Wargrave

## Art Varker

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