

Toucan do it at the Winter Carnival

by John Dobbs

Monday night, the McInnis Room at the SUB heard a very hard working, vibrant band that, though it has been active for two years with fewer members, now has a bigger line up and lot of new material. Basically, the content is West Indian Reggae & Calypso which is performed beautifully with all the excitement of the West Indies. . . . Apart from some really excitingly done standards, there was the added benefit of a Dub Master (Conrad Thomas) who is also the very jive drummer of the band. . . . The Reggae Dub Master (or toaster) relates the wisdom of Jah & Herb (jolly green stuff). Here the sounds were excellent. . . . Dub Reggae is my favourite style of the music and the musicians excelled. . . . The band also performed a variety of other material, some by Tamla Motown greats like Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder which were delightfully sung by various of the vocal performers in the band notably the three females (two from Bermuda and one from Trinidad) who as well as doing the backup vocals on the Reggae & Calypso pieces also did



Two Of Toucan's vocalists sing a duet at Winter Carnival.

some fine solos. . . . Dawn (from Bermuda) did some stirring work with Diana Ross' "I'm coming out"

Perhaps though I should start at the beginning of the evening. It started with a very apt bit of announcing by Charla Williams, a student at Dalhousie who has a fair

amount of experience at competing and she introduced the Dance contest. . . . There followed, four couples, one after the other, dancing unusually choreographed dance numbers, to record choices. The dancers did their acfs twice, competing for the grand prize of 100 dollars. This part

of the evening was fun and obviously the dances had been worked on with care, especially the winners, Karen Beal and Micheal Harper who are apparently working on a professional level as well. I enjoyed the spirit of the Dance contest and especially the couple who did a funky sensual number to "You are my lovely one" by Michael Jackson. The other two dance sets were active and even funny. . . .(intentionally)

But back to the band. . . . They are all students at Dal more or less co-ordinated and arranged by Adrian Lamb, the bass player from St. Kitts. . . . They are a non-professional band organized for functions at Dal. . . . by volunteer musicians who all seem to have any avid and keen interest in Reggae music. A friend of mine, who is head of the W.I.F. (West Indian Fraternity) of Dartmouth was sitting with me observing the band with members of Corinda. . . . a West Indian entertainments committee here in Halifax. He thought their Reggae and Calypso was very fine. . . . Perhaps they'll turn professional yet.

For a part of the evening

they also did a medley of rock n Roll which was interesting and well performed and fit into the evenings entertainment but was an appendage rather than an integral part of the general West Indian/ Soul music bag.

The backgrounds of the musicians were varied, two of the musicians being from Dominique, but, who have lived sometime in England, where there is a very large West Indian population and consequently, a big interest in Reggae & Calypso. I should also mention the keyboard players who are from Nova Scotia, but who fit in very well with the West Indian music. All in all, there were eleven players which makes it difficult to list their names, so I won't. The best thing you can do is see them at your earliest convenience.

I was asked by the band to mention Liz Ingram who played a big part in getting the band to play on Monday. . . . Everyone who was involved though played a big part (not to mention the excellent bar service) and the evening was worth every penny of the two dollar entry fee.

Housewife drudgery—a belittling experience

Movie Review: **The Incredible Shrinking Woman**

by Michael McCarthy

This is the story of a woman who gave so much, and got so little (pun-laughter and applause here). If you like a few laughs, but with enough filler to enable you to make several trips to the candy bar and the pinball machine, this is your movie. If you're looking for sustained comedy or originality, don't.

For some strange reason, Lily Tomlin is averse to giving her immense comic talent free rein on the screen. In this film, she is continually submerging her sharp wit, innovation, and tremendous ability to capture the laughable in people's characters and magnify it in her routines (as seen on T.V. or in her stage act, or listened to on her recordings), burying them underneath a turbid, synthetic and appallingly insubstantial morass which is, apparently, an attempt at "meaningful dramatic acting", or "socially conscious entertainment", or some form of "responsible money-making". Not that these are unworthy or specious goals in themselves, but Ms. Tomlin merely plays lip service to them, drawing attention not to the ideas, but to her abysmally casual, phony and callous manner of diletantism in relation to them. Along the way, she, and the movie, neglect to develop their comic potential, leaving the audience expecting more than what they get in both areas.

Everything in this film is borrowed from some effort made to provide a send-up of

numerous well remembered situations, but not enough to prevent the viewer from being bored with tired, overworked clichés. Ms. Tomlin plays an average housewife / mother of two in a typical suburban wasteland. She has the same masochistic tendencies all housebound mothers require, and borrows a last name, Kramer, which has recently been emblazoned in a monolithic paean to mawkishness, a quality in this movie which could be lampooned, but which is left in tact to add to its flaws. Charles Grodin once again plays the sensitive, struggling-to-understand-and-be-understood husband, i.e. a spineless wimp who is in advertising, bringing such necessities as perfume and glue to the ever smelly and unglued public. An accidental mixture of all the unnecessary synthetic ingredients of just about any commercial, superfluous hype-job product obtruding in the average wastrel's home causes Mrs. Kramer to shrink, steadily. Her fame grows as she gets smaller. The ad company gets her to cover up the cause of her shrinking. Ned Beatty tries to give the movie a sincere air by repeating his role (from Network) as an unscrupulous businessman, but he is both shallow and largely unfunny. An attempt is made to hint that the cause of this catastrophe is America's obsession with commercialism, more and catchier products, and dangerous man-made chemical additives. "Do you really think what the world needs is another perfume?" Pat Kramer asks of her husband. The attempt is

as superficial as it claims consumer society is. Instead of levelling both barrels and firing, the film attempts to nudge the problem with enough implications and tentative cynicisms that it will go away in a fit of pique. The movie fails utterly and irrevocably on any level of social comment.

Ms. Tomlin plays her role like she's in a semi-documentary, while the rest of the cast is trying for laughs. Although she's the star, she



doesn't have very much screen time, and the bulk of the work is left to her (fortunately) fine supporting cast.

Still, the situations in the film allow for a reasonable number of laughs, even if they are separated by longish stretches of shallow dullness. There is room for a number of once-in-a-lifetime puns, such as "no one will ever fill her shoes", and "come down off that soapbox". Mrs. Kramer

gets wet on by one of "those" kind of dolls, and nearly

drowns. She falls down a drain and is believed dead. She gets involved with a parody of King Kong, with her so tiny that an ordinary gorilla seems twenty stories high.

She is held captive in a hamster cage by former Laugh In cohort Henry Gibson, who makes a fine villain. She appears on the Mike Douglas Show (Mike sings "Little

friend and cohort Sydney the super-intelligent gorilla, played by Richard A. Baker (who also played the remake

of King Kong). Blankfield's manic brand of comedy picks up the pace for a hilarious ending, which makes excellent use of Sydney's bestial / human anomalies in a wild elevator routine involving a keystone-cop-like chase.

Some additional support is provided by Ms. Tomlin's second role as prim prig spinster Judith Beasley, beauty aid salesperson and community mover, who counts the number of times her neighbours fail to clean up their dog's feces, and who gets to read a list of ingredients on a food box which includes "tumescant tissue of bull scrotum".

There was a huge crowd for this movie, most of whom seemed satiated by the fifteen-minute rapid-fire howling laughter sequence at the end of the movie. For myself, the

good effort at the end of the film didn't erase my dissatisfaction with the first hour and ten minutes of slow-moving, underplayed, sententious vapidity, broken up by an occasional painfully funny pun or cynical, tongue-in-cheek, toadying vogue putdown.

Nonetheless, I did get a few laughs, and the evening certainly wasn't a disaster, just much less than you would expect from a comedy starring Lily Tomlin.

who helps Mrs. Kramer escape and save the world from being shrunk to two inches, and his