

# Dal Theatre kicks off with *Albertine*

BY DANIEL CLARK

"Vive le Quebec Libre!" demanded Rene Levesque. Forty years of the struggle of 'la belle province' condensed into four words. Can the plight of a people be so neatly summed up? Michel Tremblay's *Albertine in 5 times* would certainly disagree.

The play, which ran from October 16th-19th in the David MacK.Murray Theatre of the Dal Arts Centre, presents the life of a woman and how it echoes the discord within a province. *Albertine* is a working class Quebecois woman presented simultaneously at the ages of 30, 40, 50, 60 and 70 by five talented actresses. The other character in the play is Madeline, *Albertine's* sister, and the play's mediator of conversation.

*Albertine* at each stage of her life is a remarkably different creature. Like the province in which she resides, *Albertine* travels thought a diverse range of emotional and mental states.

As a spectator you can't help feeling like you are seeing the collision of five armies on one battlefield, where they are reluctant to fight. When they do fight it is at one moment tentative and at others bloodthirsty. Whether intense or reserved, the conflicts are always introspective and illuminating.

You can watch this play on two separate levels. First, you cannot help but be caught up in the dynamic discovery of these six women; how their emotions are radically different, and yet caustically intertwined. The second is a far more intellectual level, involving the various metaphors between the province and the woman.

This was an excellent production with good acting all round, but I must acknowledge three excellent performances. First is Jody

Stevens (*Albertine* at 40) who captivated me with the 'Rage' that was able to cripple her character.

Jessica Heafey (*Albertine* at 60) conveyed the internally driven woman on the verge of suicide. She is seemingly broken but when the circumstances are right excludes the 'Rage' which drove her earlier incarnations.

It can't be easy for a young actress to portray a lonely and accepting old woman who is the endgame of her predecessors. Sara Holmes (*Albertine* at 70) does it wonderfully.

Congratulations should go to set designer Torin Buzek. Despite minimal space, the stage captures five unique environs which reflect and compliment the characters residing within, but never overwhelms.

Although director Gyllian Raby did an excellent job in moulding the performances of her actors into one cohesive whole, I do have one major criticism. There is a large amount of unnecessary movement on the stage. When they're not speaking characters had a tendency to float around, and it is very distracting.

I also was not overly impressed by the costuming. I think the simplicity of the clothing is fine, but when *Albertine* tries to recapture her life at 50; she looked like Nancy Sinatra without the boots. I have a hard time believing that any 50 year old would be that blind.

All together this is an excellent production. Tremblay mixes together captivating drama with a splash of light humour.

If you haven't seen the show yet, then you have just one more chance. There will be a special presentation this Sunday at noon in the David MacK.Murray for l'Association des professeurs des littatures Acadienne et Quebecois de l'Atlantique. All are welcome.



## Chatting with a Friendz

BY MARK REYNOLDS

The Superfriendz have been around Halifax for three years, entertaining crowds with their energetic and melodic brand of pop. The Gazette caught up with Matt Murphy, the Friendz's drummer—set jumping singer/guitarist, at a local coffee shop.

**Gaz** — So what have the Superfriendz been doing these last few months?

**Matt** — Well, we have a ten inch ep out. It's not been very well publicized, it's kind of a low key thing, called *Play the Game, not Games*. It's some songs that didn't make it on the last album, and some that we were going to release as singles. It's only on vinyl and there were only 1000 copies pressed. We think we may release it along with our first album in the States.

**Gaz** — Are you trying to get distribution in the States?

**Matt** — Well, we're holding off I guess. Our record company here (Murderrecords) was trying to get their whole catalogue licensed at once, but that didn't work out. Now I think they're trying to get us off on another label. We got some small independent labels that would like to do it for us, and we're also thinking of talking to some big people...but I don't know

about the idea of working with a big label. We just did this song ("Blue Tattoo") for the movie *Hardcore Logo* — it's tied in with the movie, but not actually in the movie. It's with BMG, and ours is the single for it, it's on Much Music. That was our first experience with a big label, where we didn't have complete control. We'd get an edit of the song back and it would be like nothing we had asked for, our video ideas would be given this double take. Whereas with Murder, we can do whatever we want, and you get the feeling that you are doing something, and that it's not out of your control.

**Gaz** — I had heard that the Superfriendz had done a show in someone's backyard?

**Matt** — Our manager found this guy through a college radio station in Kitchener, and he said we could play in his backyard, and it sounded like fun, we had nothing else to do, and we showed up and there was a barbecue in this tiny little yard. It so we rained into our third song so we moved everything into his basement, and it was so small, and there were something like 50 to 60 people, it was packed. They were right at our feet, all scrunched together.

**Gaz** — Would you consider doing that again?

**Matt** — Yes, for sure, it's bet-

ter than playing at some jock bar.

**Gaz** — For the *Mock up, Scale down* release, you had a party on a boat. Do you have any plans like that for your next release in January?

**Matt** — Something different, but not too ritzy, maybe something winter-oriented. A ski hill might be cool.

**Gaz** — *Mock Up, Scale Down* has a very distinct sound, very stripped down. Is the new album going to change that?

**Matt** — I think there's a distinct sound there. It's different from *Mock Up, Scale Down*, it's not as light hearted. I think *Mock Up, Scale Down* sounds like a band that is happy to be finally playing their own songs. This next one is going to sound like a band that's a little more proud, a little more confident. We have piano, there are tape loops joining one song to the next. There's this tape loop that Charles [Austin] made using a pump organ. I play a little violin. It's still really bass/guitar/drums, because that's just how we write songs. It's sounds bigger, fuller. The guy who produced it is Eric Masanuga, from the Dambuilders, up in Toronto. It's called *Fin du Monde*.

**Gaz** — After the beer? (*Fin du Monde* is a high-alcohol beer made by a microbrewery in

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