

Life After Man puts the camp back into cabaret

PJ Todd

If you're convinced good entertainment has to empty your pocket, *Life After Man*, a campus cabaret, should change your mind. For only 75 cents you can see a lusty and provocative social satire that successfully exploits every female stereotype ever dreamed up.

Marni Walsh, a 3rd year Theatre student and the writer, director and star of the extravaganza has been "playing around with the concept for about a year", but brought "the whole thing together in a week." The other York actresses involved, Cynthia Stanhope, Leslie-Anne Bentley and Laurie Graham have good voices that

harmonize well and are capable of belt-em-out Broadway delivery. Walsh is no exception — this lady is downtown material.

Energetic song and dance numbers — everything from '50's rock 'n roll doo-waa trios to sultry red-light crooning — are alternated with comic vignettes and vintage photographs which are projected onto a large backdrop (take a look at what Mona Lisa's got in her hand).

The quartet is accompanied by an enthusiastic band under the direction of Craig Wingrove and there is a bar to enhance the dance hall atmosphere.

The sophistication of Walsh's perspective — social and comic — is impressive. She's borrowed

some jokes — "the age of chivalry is dead. Nowadays you're lucky if you don't get your tits caught in the bus door" — and spliced them together with moments from real life. A housewife turned 'homewrecker' tells her daughter "Your father and I had a love-hate relationship. We loved him and hated me" — and does so with deadpan Carol Burnett posturing that makes it work.

The entire show 'works' and in Walsh's hands we forget those formidable February blues.

The Cabaret runs a full hour February 25, 26, 27 at 8:30 and 10:30. There's a special Midnight show Friday.

Life After Man, MacLaughlin College, Mac Hall.



Marni Walsh (left), Cynthia Stanhope, Laurie Graham and Leslie-Anne Bentley star in *Life After Man*.

Elliott Lejko

Success story at Nat Taylor:

Kemeny's Quest For Fire

James Weyman

A Canadian film success story descended on the Nat Taylor Cinema in the person of John Kemeny, co-producer of the controversial big budget film, *Quest for Fire*. Brought by fellow National Film Board alumnus James Beveridge (York professor of Film Studies), Kemeny shared some insights into the vagaries of big-time producership, and how to get there, with an

audience of eager young film majors.

Kemeny's own story reads like the typical rags-to-riches American myth. An immigrant from 1956 Hungary, he got on at the NFB stapling scripts. From the copy room he gradually moved his way upstairs, finally to director and producer, working with noted filmmaker Donald Brittain on a number of significant projects including

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. Leonard Cohen, and the *Challenge for Change* series.

Realising that producing was really what he did best, Kemeny left the proving ground of the NFB after twelve and a half years and went into independent production with several associates. One of their numerous productions was *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*.

Almost died

In 1979, he formed the International Cinema Corporation (ICC) with Denis Heroux. In two years, ICC has been responsible for *Atlantic City*, *Les Plouffles*, and *Quest for Fire*. "I'm happy and proud of *Quest for Fire*," said Kemeny in his Hungarian-tinted English. "It's been the most exciting project of my life, even though it almost died several times."

For *Quest* he found himself producing a story that is startling and original. ("It's about human life on Earth 80,000 years ago," but, adds Kemeny, "it goes far beyond Raquel Welch in a fur bikini".) Then came the problem of selling a \$12 million budget to investment brokers who were more concerned with the size of the leading lady's T's and A than storyline. "We had to sign over our children and toothbrushes," he quipped, but only half jokingly.

Kemeny is now overseeing the \$7 million marketing campaign for a film that has actors made

Like gorillas

up to look more like gorillas than humans, tigers with sabre-tooth dentures, and elephants in woolly mammoth suits.

When a film needs to gross \$50 million just to break even, trying to make a commercial success that still has a high level of intellectual and artistic integrity isn't a simple proposition. Less complex however, are Kemeny's words of advice to the aspiring young producer. "Being a producer is not easy," he stated matter-of-factly. "If you are inclined to an ulcer or heart attack, don't do it."

Despite the health hazards, Kemeny, with his cool composure and L.A. tan, seems to be very much alive and kicking.

Feelings, scheduled for release in March, premieres Island Record's jazz label, Antilles Black and Gold; the Toronto concerts were part of a ten city tour that will also include Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco and Vancouver; last summer he



Lisa Kates

completed a successful European tour and is working now on a Japanese tour; he wrote and conducted the score for Josef Bogdanovich's film *Box Office*.

In the fifties Coleman was regarded as somewhat of a musical freak and many musicians were afraid to play with him. Then he found expression with a handful of musicians who were to become his constant accompaniment: Don Cherry, Ed Blackwell, Billy Higgins, Charlie Haden, Charles Moffet, Dewey Redman, Scott LaFaro, David Izenzon and Jimmy Garrison. With his present band, Ornette Coleman is once again at the forefront of modern jazz, where he's always been. His music spans the distance between Bebop, Rhythm and Blues, Funk and Beyond. And as he said after the second show, "The music has to keep on moving and I have got to keep on moving with it."

Ornette Coleman:

Still free in the fifties

Clifton Joseph

In terms of public adulation/veneration, it is definitely a second blooming for jazz saxophonist innovator/composer/avant-gardist extraordinaire Ornette Coleman.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, schooled in travelling Rhythm and Blues bands, and urged on by the teachings of Bebopper Red Connors, Coleman passionately burst on the scene over twenty years ago with his unorthodox free jazz improvisations. Then he ignored harmonic chord progressions and based his solos instead on melodic and rhythmic phrases.

It was with this same flair for melodic improvisation that he thrilled two sold-out concerts at the Nickelodeon on Sunday night. He and his Prime Time Band let loose a flurry of musical sounds that had the audience rocking in a mesmerizing rhythmic trance.

His Prime Time Band (which is in effect two bands, since he employs two rhythms sections of basses, drums and guitars) is a well-honed amalgam of Rhythm and Free musicians: drummer James Jones (of Roberta Flack fame) strong rhythmic flashes provided the right counterpoint and unity-in-contrast to the "free" rhythmic veerings of Denardo Coleman; bass-player Al McDowell (formerly of Luther Vandross and Cheryl Lynn) provided an able point of reference and departure for the energetic bass of Jamaaladeen Tacuma; guitarists Bern Nix and Charles Ellerbee delivered a carpet of sound to complete the outfit. Coleman himself was the bridge with his searing and soaring solos pregnant with melodic counterpoints. He calls his music harmolodics and it is a music that those present will remember for a long time to come.

Recent happenings show that the fifty-two-year-old innovator is determined to reap the fruits of this his second harvest: for managers, he has signed, nearly two years ago, with the prestigious organization of Sid Bernstein Associates in New York; his new album *Those Human*

Coppola film is fair fare

Al Locke

Page one of the press kit for *One from the Heart* explains what to expect from Francis Coppola's multi-million dollar fantasy flic: "The persons and events in this film are fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons or events is unintentional."

If anything, similarity to real life is intentionally discarded, and what is left is a 1930's love story (love was grand in the Great Depression) elevated by 21st century film technology. The package is similar to the *Mona Lisa* — very ordinary woman, very masterful painting.

One from the Heart is the story of Frannie and Hank, a young couple celebrating their fifth (unmarried) anniversary one July 4th in Las Vegas. Hank and Frannie are bored with each other in the city of illusion, have a big fight, and stomp off down the street to the Las Vegas Strip. Frannie meets a Latin pianist (sic) and Hank meets a circus girl (Nastassia Kinski). The rest of the story is so disgustingly

predictable and sweet that no further comment is necessary or deserved.

Technically, *One from the Heart* is loaded with dramatic allusions to the musical, the love story, Theatre Noir and Brechtian theatre. It has all of the variations of live theatre which range from the traditional drawing of the curtains to the empty stage of Samuel Beckett.

Each scene appears to be lit and photographed as if to please a live theatre audience, rather than people sitting in a dark cavern. With that change of perspective in *One From the Heart*, the actors' presence is necessarily altered. Instead of the smooth, machine-like movements we are used to, we see the comparatively choppy movements of a stage performer.

Visually, *One From The Heart* has a sharp, pureness of image unparalleled on the screen.

If this was American Bandstand, *One From the Heart* would get a 57% — it was well put together, but you wouldn't sing along.

Pure poetry in motion

Lisa Kates

For those interested in an innovative way of understanding those abstract, avant-garde poets, one must see their work dramatized. This week at the Theatre Centre 'Buddies in Bad Times Theatre' presents three plays of poetry. The Theatre itself is set discretely in a warehouse, but has been transformed into an intimate stage where Torontonians can drink, relax and enjoy performances by Canadian Talent.

On the right stage Mary Vingoe's *Under the Sink, Down the Drain and What Alice Found There* began as three actors (2 female, 1 male) clad in white tunics, started the play off by miming out the climbing of Mt. Everest. When one asked the other why they were climbing the mountain the reply was "Because it's there". The play's composition flowed smoothly as the actors somersaulted and danced into the following acts.

After intermission the theatre goer is transported to another stage and another era. Christopher Dewdney's *Hand in Glove With an Old Hat* is an hilarious assortment of every practically known cliché. Director Richard Sholchet's

visual aids help to illuminate Dewdney's work. One imagines themselves to be back in the 40's as the man (played by Sky Gilbert) could be Sam Spade, cool, calm and collected as he shoots off lines which are hard to say with a straight face. The timing and visual effects (smoke, lighting and costume) all give the play its body.

Without switching the stage, or an intermission, Gary LeFebre appears wearing satin red shorts, to perform Gilbert's *Oedipal Shorts*. LeFebre's strong emotional performance arouses stinging emotions as he describes his life and his feeling for his parents — specifically his hatred of his father and love of his mother. Like Hamlet, the boy, approaching death, asks for one last soliloquy. Maintaining constant eye contact LeFebre sent shivers up the audience's collective spine, with his deeply emotional and sensitive discourse.

Acting out poetry is an exciting idea, as words, sometimes ambiguous are transformed into clear, straight ahead ideas. As well as this, the acting of poetry gives the poet an added insight into his work, which could aid in the clarifying of further poetry.