

## THE JAZZ BUTCHER

## "Fishcotheque"

(Mercury)

On paper, *The Jazz Butcher* looks like a great idea. he's got a lot to say, and does so with intelligence and humour. Unfortunately, the transfer to vinyl isn't as effective.

In the past, *The Jazz Butcher* has often been able to match the calibre of his lyrics with equally impressive music. On *Fishcotheque*, the lyrical bite is ultimately forgettable - pleasant enough, but nothing to work up a sweat about. Too bad, because this could have been a fun album. Instead, it's just hip muzak.

Tom Stillwell

BEN ELTON

Motormouth

(Polygram)

While some American comedians can be undoubtedly verging on genius, I don't think any of the Yanks currently working the circuit can stand up to the British when it comes to sheer condemnation and acerbic criticism of everything that is hypocritical in the world.

The CHSR faithful will have already had a taste of the bizarre bullet-head Alexie Sayle (unfortunately most probably in the form of 'Didn't you kill my brother?') but there are many others that make up the burgeoning 'alternative comedy' scene that has gone from strength to strength in England since the early eighties.

One of our best proponents of the kick-over-the-statuses approach is Ben Elton, a native of Catford, South London, whose gob, as the title suggests, is always set way, way past stun.

He's crude, he's base, but boy is it ever great to hear him rip the shit out of things that everyday folk with just an inkling of intelligence have to put up with throughout their existence. In the space of forty minutes our Ben, who at times seems so wired you can hear his spine beginning to pop, sprints through topics such as the unbelievable drunken idiocy of student rugby players in the university bar, the wankers that are responsible for the ads that make you spontaneously indulge in a spot of projectile vomiting, the danger of erections on a nudist beach and the disgusting way that a lot of comedy writers rely on tits to get cheap laughs. All the way through, anybody that might even be remotely considered as prejudiced (sexist, racist etc) gets sliced into chunky chicken before being fed to the neighbor's snapping turtles.

Unfortunately, as you might expect, the humour doesn't really transfer itself very well across the Atlantic, where the biggest laughs are achieved when Jack Tripper gets half a ton of gravy tipped over his groin (I suppose that's why the dire shit of Benny Hill DOES transfer well). I was listening to this last week with a friend, and although I was clutching my bollocks with tears streaming down my pock-marked cheeks, she merely stared into space at a lot of the gags.

You even get a free booklet/biog with the album which is as funny as the record. Ben explains that his interest in drama began initially in order to escape the necessity of wearing the clothes that were fashionable in the seventies. You too must remember - "... huge baggy trousers with enormous patch pockets which you stuffed your scarf in so it looked like you had a hunch-back crawling up your leg." Of *Life on the Road* Ben says he can't understand why everybody thinks he has to indulge in the booze and sex trap of a rock and roll lifestyle as part of his job. "When librarians have stamped their last book for the day, they don't say: 'Great, now to snog the dog in a jacuzzi full of lager'."

This is real comedy where an obvious and important power can be felt. Dear Canadians, do not regard the tupperware items of puke you see on PBS every Friday night as English humour. For a crash course in the real side of things, crank up *Motormouth*. Thank you, you've been an audience - now f+\*k off home!

NANCY MAXIME

## ZOO STORY

The pain of alienation and the price of conformity will be examined when Theatre Saint Thomas presents *The Zoo Story* April 5th to 9th at Edmund Casey Hall on the STU campus.

*The Zoo Story*, Edward Albee's first major play, was premiered in Berlin in 1951 and is still produced with great frequentum. The script, packed with the urgent emotion of a young and anxious writer, tells the story of an apparently chance meeting, between Peter, a white-collared executive and Jerry, an uncollared roamer.

Peter is the lucky upperclass family man that so many wish to be. Securely employed and blessed with children and all the trappings of a comfortable home, Peter has long tired of being grateful for what is his and has come to grips with the frustration of his responsibilities by allowing himself to walk well-heeled on the treadmill. To Peter escape comes from spending Sunday afternoon alone in the park reading adventure stories.

What Peter has browsed, Jerry has lived. Having only the slightest hold on reality, Jerry is an orphaned, impoverished unfortunate. His home is a pitiful roominghouse which bears sad resemblance to the world we live in. The fact that Jerry is an outcast leaves one wondering if society rejected him or if he rejected society. After years of crippling loneliness, Jerry is so desperate for communication and so unable to relate to anything that he is being pushed to fatal strain.

As Jerry tries desperately to free Peter of his cage so that he can escape from his own, the problems of two disillusioned men are exposed. Slowly the meeting becomes seen as a meeting of fate instead of one of chance and it's innocence curdles. Peter, who is at first wary of Jerry, is slowly drawn to him by the hypnotic air surrounding the man; this attraction frightens Peter and his attempt to resist brings about the shocking close which forces two lives into one body and says a bit about us all.

The play is directed by Ron Spuries and features Micheal Cronin as Peter and Bill McKibbon as Jerry. Technical assistance is by TNB, Mr. Spuries is assisted by Cathy Lahue and production assistance is by Ilisy Silk. Publicity is by Alpee Spurls.

Performances are April 5 and 7 at 1:00 PM, April 6 and 8 at 12:30 PM, and April 7, 8 and 9 at 8:00 PM. Admission is \$1.00 and tickets will be available at the door.

BILL MCKIBBON

VILE LAWYERS AND  
DRACONIAN DUDES

By SANDY GLIDDEN   thrills to the devilry of TNB's "Volpone"

Poor Volpone! Eyes like frog pits? A nose that doth run like a common sewer? Can things get much worse, pray tell?

*Volpone*, a 17th century black comedy written by Ben Jonson was resurrected to a new life recently by the UNB Theatre Workshop under the direction of John Ruganda.

Faking a premature demise, the crafty Volpone (played by David Harquail) spins a web of greediness and deceit. Craftily and callously our main character snickers while accumulating some of his victims most prized assets (a precious plate, coins, a valued pearl) - and almost gets the merchant's wife. Alas, his greedy victims catch on and in the end this tangled web is finally broken and the bad guys get their due . . . much to my relief!

Some of the draconian individuals that left imprints on my consciousness were the effervescent brat Mosca (Tom Richards) who did an excellent performance as the parasitic Rogue of Volpone. He carried the play with his clarity of line and sparkling enthusiasm.

Another, Voltore (Chris deCourcy-Ireland) the mean, lean greed-machine was well remembered. His role of the vile lawyer certainly convinced me.

My fave character was the dark and brooding Corvino (Cameron Crimmons). He played the dire self-serving husband of Celia (Kathleen Naylor). Crimmins' dark calmness added much to the medieval atmosphere of rank air and carrion crows. His lines were delivered with ease. (He could also be a stand-in for the lead singer of The Cure).

And we musn't forget the elderly Corbaccio (James McDougall) whose true to life mannerisms and make-up job were terrific.

Ah yes, Lady Politic Would-Be (Peggy McBride) was delightfully obnoxious, chattering all the while non-stop. I couldn't imagine this play without this parrot.

Finally, there was Volpone, whose commanding stature certainly in my mind tagged him the big bully.

Greg Nowlan's split-level set (he also played Sir Falstaff Would Be) proved innovative and uncluttered. Less is more, as it were. All performers worked in complete harmony upon set changes. Impressive!

Costumes were early modern. Nice suits, fellas! Did I see the ADR man in there somewhere? Blink through a business convention scene? No? Really, nice touch! The actresses, however, donned more non-conformist attire.

Music added greatly to mood.

Beefs? A couple. I had to strain my ears to catch some of the lines and some lines were rattled off a bit too fast - but again, the play was lengthy and I can understand the fast pace. Then - I had problems of my own. Halfway through the play while stretching my legs I booted the behind of an engrossed viewer in front of me. (Was my face red).

In closing, congratulations to the UNB Theatre Workshop for an entertaining evening. Their hard work and dedication shone through and touched us all.

You missed it? You lose Babe.