

Entertainment

Unfit for Paradise

Les Girlz delight with bloomers and brains

W. Hurst

Unfit for Paradise, the new satire at the Rivoli, is intelligent entertainment and dynamic women's art.

Using film, slides, voices, dance and stand-up comedy, the show initially deals with the North American mania for southern resorts, but moves on to better targets.

The script was adapted for the stage by Margaret Dragu and Jim Burt from a book by Susan Swann. Swann's other works include *The*

Last of the Golden Girls, which won the National Magazine Award.

Margaret Dragu has directed and produced her own stage work, notably the *Sunset Stripper Show*, at the Toronto Dance Festival in 1978. Dragu also performs in *Unfit for Paradise* with Elizabeth Chitty and Jane Ellison, who are successful performing artists. All three women premiered *Unfit* in Vancouver at the Western Front.

For the Toronto run, the Rivoli has been transformed into the

"Limbo Lounge", complete with decorative bananas on the tables and exotic drinks served by the Limbo Lounge Liquor Lasses.

Introduced by an oily male voice, Dragu, Chitty and Ellison open the show as Les Girlz, sporting those blue bloomers that blighted high school gyms. Les Girlz jump from a frantic Busby Berkley number into various sketches, monologues and costumes.

Blue bloomers

In the *Zanzibar Carwash*, two 'naughty nightie' dancers parade the most absurd false breasts. In *Fashion Politics Fashion*, two women exchange roles by exchanging walking styles—a model of fascism becomes a model of fashion.

In *Blonde Stand-Up*, Chitty plays the blonde, desirable and ridiculously self-assured Honey, who laments a spoiled vacation. She is dumped by her boyfriend when she breaks one of his 'rules of discretion' by starting her period while on holiday.

Hot Feet in Puerto Rico catalogues the escapades of three men, through

narration and slides. One of the men, the narrator, protests that he doesn't want just 'cheap sex', yet he brandishes the score card of conquests at the end of his trip.

Frigid virgin

The best vignette of the show is the last. *Arctic Fantasy* is the tale of a frigid virgin and her amorous, incessant admirer. With a step ladder, muskrat coat and other props, Dragu, Chitty and Ellison work over Man-his myths and supposed magic. These women create images of mystery and humour.

Most of the material is worth more than the initial laughter and the audience is given the chance to appreciate the implications of the material.

Each of the women performs with zest; and the humour is often refreshingly vulgar.

Too often satire depends upon the audience's superiority to the satire's victim—being let in on a joke at someone else's expense.

Unfit for Paradise doesn't work that way. Its satire is thoughtful and generous, yet it remains dead accurate. Some material fails because the script attempts to cover too much ground. However, the scope is impressive.

It is unlikely that men could create or perform material of this sort, even if they wanted to. There is a sensibility at work here that seems, to a large degree, to exclude the male mentality.

Then again, there are few women like Dragu and company. They are witty, brave and entertaining artists.

Until October 3rd.

Ticket information: 533-6586



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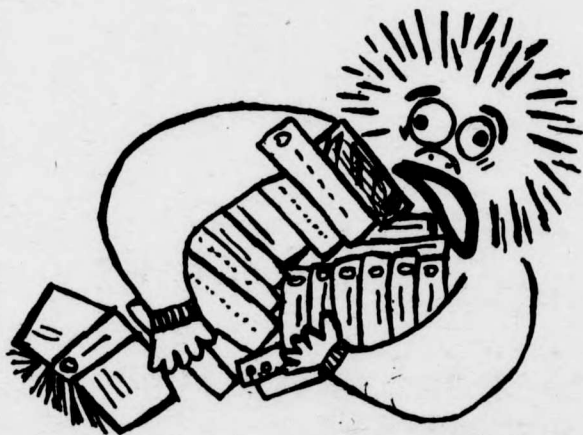
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