

Excalibur continues its coverage of 25th anniversary Fine Arts events

Alumni highlight ballet, neon and music

By STEPHEN MILTON

Although studying film may not appear to be the road to success which Mom envisaged, the Film and Video department's screening of alumni films proved that there is a future in it for those at York.

The screening was sponsored by the film department to honour the accomplishments of its alumni, and to help the university celebrate its 25th anniversary. As the opening speaker suggested in observing the small turnout to the first screening at Nat Taylor cinema last Friday, "this is probably due to the high employability of our film grads."

Each of the three films were documentaries which have been aired by the CBC. Two of the films were produced after the filmmakers had graduated from the undergraduate film program. Rudy Buttignol's

1985 mini-Oscar award winner portrays modern-day von Trapp family

Neon: An Electric Memoir was produced in 1984, while Kathryn Hope's film, *Young and Just Beginning* was broadcast in 1977. The third film, Peter Weyman's *The Leahys* was produced as his master's thesis while attending York's graduate film program in 1982-83.

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Weyman's film marks the largest undertaking by a graduate film student from York to date, and was the recipient of the 1985 mini-Oscar for Best Foreign Student Film from the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Weyman had originally intended to do a serious film about "bums on skid row," but one of his film professors advised that he do something that he knew more about. Weyman had spent the previous five years at Trent University in Peterborough, and had heard about the Leahy family in nearby Lakefield. The Leahys were a rural family with eleven children who performed traditional music with a Celtic feel. Weyman travelled to Lakefield to approach the family about doing the documentary, and received an impromptu performance in their living room. The Leahys agreed to allow Weyman follow them around that summer, and a year later the editing was complete.

The Leahys is a sensitive portrayal of the unique experiences of a modern-day von Trapp family, traversing the rural areas of Ontario to perform. All of the family's eleven children play instruments and step dance, carrying on the performing tradition of their parents. Weyman's camera captures the humour of a family which is constantly on the road, and has to keep its wits as they spend literally all their time together.

Weyman made the film with the help of four other York students, and with financing from York and CBC, in addition to his own funds. The film cost a total of \$25,000, with over half being provided by the CBC's organization "Canadian Reflections," which frequently sponsors

Narrator of *Neon: An Electric Memoir* is as chintzy and gaudy as neon itself

independent filmmakers in return for airing privileges. Weyman and his brother James (who also worked on *The Leahys*) have since formed their own film company, "Closeup Film Ltd.," and are currently working on a film about publisher Jack McClelland.

Kathryn Hope's film, *Young and Just Beginning—Pierre* has also garnered awards, for its depiction of the

experience of boys enrolled at the National Ballet School. The film was given the Gold Plaque from the 1978 Chicago International Film Festival, the Best Film Award by the 1979 Children Film Festival, Canada, as well as the Diploma D'Honore, 1979 MIFED International Film Festival. Ms. Hope is currently teaching film at York's department of Film and Video.

Of the three documentaries presented, Rudy Buttignol's *Neon: An Electric Memoir* was by far the most original. Buttignol's film offers an historical chronicle of the evolution of neon lights, from their initial use on Broadway to their widespread popularity after World War Two, and finally their current asylum in art galleries. What makes the piece entertaining is its narrator, a middle-aged New York woman whose throat has played host to too many shots of whiskey, and whose eyes are barely visible behind two-inch long false eye lashes. Played by actress Jackie Burroughs, the narrator is as chintzy and gaudy as neon itself, yet

sincerely reverent of this staple of pop culture which has finally achieved high chic status in the modern art galleries.

If the work of Buttignol and his fellow alumni Weyman and Hope is any indication of the film department's quality, then many of York's larger departments have reason to be envious.



Harriet says: Quit beefing! See alumni in action.

Dance alumni cultivate awareness of body, mind and soul in modern works

By NICOLE DESJARDINS

The Dance Alumni Performance was a flashback for some and an encouraging open door to the future for others. To see both York dance alumni and students together on stage last Tuesday was a journey through time.

The performance at Burton Auditorium opened with *Loose Joints* choreographed by dance alumna Fanny Ghorayeb. It was a jazzy opening to a spectacular show. This was followed by *Last Walk* by dance alumna Patricia Fraser and *Tango d'Octobre* by artist-in-resident Juan Antonio. *Legacy* by dance alumna Monica George concluded the performance.

Keith Urban, chairman of the Dance Department acknowledged that the calibre of dancing by York students was similar to that of alumni during their academic years at York. He foresees the next dance graduates as developing the same awareness of body, mind and soul the dance alumni.

Urban remembers Fanny Ghorayeb, for example, as "a small overweight dancer" while still a student. Today he rediscovered her as "a stronger, slimmer performer," who has acquired through the ten-year interval professional experience in other companies such as Toronto Dance Theatre.

In Juan Antonio's piece *Tango d'Octobre*, dance alumna Monica George and Fanny Ghorayeb illustrated many technical skills required



WAHOO! Dance grads jazz it up in *Loose Joints*, a work choreographed by alumna Fanny Ghorayeb and performed on Tuesday in the Dance Department's 25th anniversary event.

of a dancer. The dancer must move well, but also be able to act. George's and Ghorayeb's movements conveyed a passionate awareness of one another, merging and separating with intense facial expressions.

The 19 students performing in Patricia Fraser's *Last Walk* gave an overall dramatic sense to the piece. The most outstanding dancer in *Last Walk* was clearly Rose Williams in her portrayal of a desperate woman

longing for something or someone in vain. Williams was carried offstage, a crucified sacrifice in the dramatic ending of the piece.

Keith Urban foresees great upcoming performers graduating from the Dance Department in the following years. Even some first year students such as Sarah Chase from Vancouver show innate talent which Urban feels will eventually "blossom."

Theatre event sparkles with celebratory gems

By CHRIS WARREN

Strewn around the Burton Auditorium stage in various attitudes of awkwardness, the formally-dressed alumni and faculty of York's Theatre program, reading their parts from duotangs, seemed ready to put on the sort maudlin, backslapping show associated with award ceremonies. But the performance last Monday night was full of gems, and those who missed it missed one of the more spirited celebrations of York's 25th year.

Described by producers Donald Berkowitz and Ron Singer as a show about "growing up" at York, "The Best of York Theatre" constituted a program of poems, songs, and sketches with a sometimes imme-

diated but more often rather strained connection to the realities of student life. Performers included actors Sky Gilbert, Rosemary Dunsmore, Barbara Budd (the host), Dan Lett, Avery Saltzman, Djanet Sears and singer Kelita Haverland.

Relying heavily on poetry, the program was skillfully assembled by artistic co-ordinator Leon Major and resident playwright John Gregory. Poems by a wealth of York poets, including Michael Ondaatje, Eli Mandel and bpNichol, were given engaging performances and invited the loud appreciation they deserved. Being for the most part actors, the performers were able to bring the poems to life, in a way that many authors themselves are sadly unable to do, so that the audience

could enjoy and not merely endure them.

Amongst the real gems were two short monologues delivered with relaxed finesse by Gilbert, York graduate and now artistic director of the Buddies in Bad Times theatre group. Should you have the opportunity to see these comic re-tellings of classic Hollywood movie scenarios and their special relevance to the author, make a beeline for it. Songs by Kolita Haverland, Djanet Sears, and a charismatic Shaw monologue delivered by Dan Lett (nominated for a Dora award in 1984 for this work in *Delicatessen*)—all York theatre graduates—were also memorably performed.

Concluded with the collective smashing of wine glasses against the rear wall of the stage, the show succeeded in giving the audience what presumably lays behind the various 25th-year anniversary events: a sense of continuity and a (theatrical) appreciation for the part York plays in the careers of its students.

ERRATUM

In last week's Fine Arts 25th Anniversary preview 75 'upperclassmen' were incorrectly identified as having initiated the Fine Arts program at York. Joe Green, along with several other professors, were the true initiators. *Excalibur* regrets its error.

Stay tuned for next week's premiere of " " "

The deadline for 1986/87 Rhodes Scholarship Applications is October 25, 1985

The Rhodes Scholarship

A Rhodes Scholarship is tenable at the University of Oxford, usually for two years. The stipend of a Rhodes Scholarship consists of a direct payment to the University and the Scholar's College at Oxford of approved fees, plus a maintenance allowance, which is paid directly to the Scholar at the 1985 rate of £3810 per annum to cover board, lodging and other expenses. Reasonable travel costs to and from Oxford will be paid by the Trust.

A candidate for the Rhodes Scholarship must be a Canadian citizen or a person domiciled in Canada, unmarried, and have been ordinarily resident in Canada for at least the five years immediately preceding October 1, 1985. Candidates for the 1985 competition must have been born between October 2, 1961 and October 1, 1967; and they must have completed at least three years of university training by October 1, 1986.

The deadline for applications is October 25, 1985.

If you believe you qualify and are interested in applying, contact Nancy Accinelli, Student Information Officer, at 124 Central Square (667-2226) for additional information and assistance.