

Characters are well-developed

Mutants try to change world

by Emma Goldman

Mutants—sounds like the name of a punk rock band. Its rhythm and melody—fast paced, impassioned and provoking.

Youth fighting back, angry, and unaccepting of their parent's values, that's what Brad Fraser's play *Mutants* is about. Having escaped from a remand center, six delinquents hold a hostage in a condemned building in an attempt to publicize the shocking conditions of the home.

The youths have rejected the standards set for them by society, and have been swept away by the fast-paced life of sex, drugs and rock and roll. When this gets too scary there is nowhere to turn except inwards, into an autistic state, like Cal and eventually Jim. Or there is the option of death, which constantly sits perched on the ledge, waiting.

Indeed, this is almost a cliché, but Brad Fraser, the 21 year old director and writer, revitalizes the situation in this exciting play.

The play is packed with theatrical devices; soliloquies and choruses are carried off well by the young, talented cast.

The success of the play rests principally on the honest, understanding and accurate characterizations. It might have been easy to fall into the trap of portraying the delinquents as stereotypes but neither Fraser nor the cast allow this to happen.

Through brilliant manipulation of the characters through their dialogues, soliloquies and choruses Fraser reveals the delicate balance operating in the insecure and often unforgiving group of peers.

We do not hate them as insolent hoods, nor feels sorry for their plights,

but we empathize with them for their cause which goes beyond changing the conditions of the home. If they could they would "piss on the world."

Jim, played by Brian Rodomski, is the leader, the stone-faced tough guy whom everyone depends on. They love him and hate him for it. But through the sensitive scenes with his friend Cal, who is completely withdrawn after overdosing on acid, the frightened, hurt little boy side of Jim constantly tugging at his shoulder is revealed.

Plato is the highly strung bright boy, who is bursting with anger at the system which wastes exceptional individuals like himself. Phyl Zyp is magnificent in this role; a walking time bomb, he is always ticking.

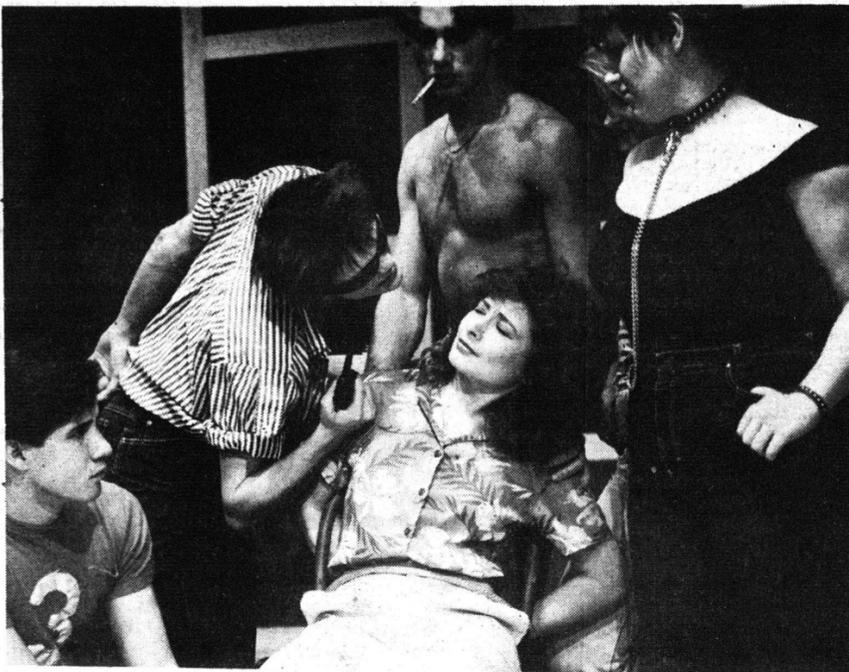
Abra, the fat, vivacious, sharpwitted girl, is played by Kat Mullaly. She is great. Her perspicacious statements and sharp tongue had me laughing, but the sardonic edge cut me as well.

Judy, the girl desperate for support, is played by Darcia Parada, whose pathetic appeals are poignant and not overdone.

The tension never lets up during the play, but keeps a steady, penetrating beat, culminating, not even fully releasing itself in the final scene.

Plato's diatribe at the very end of the play, however, is unnecessary and detracts from the original impact. The point is well made throughout the play; pounding it in at the end won't help those who have not already got it.

The scene with Abra reading the gory headlines from the *Sun* while the others talk about the joys of acid is just one instant where the statement is made more subtly and effectively.



Jett (Les Bland) watches pensively as Plato (Phil Zyp) holds a gun to the Minister of Culture's daughter, Christine (Collette Hebert). Jim (Brian Rodomski) looks concerned and Judy (Darcia Parada) in the background and Abra (Kat Mullaly) sneer at the "bourgeois slut."

But there is no way Fraser could subdue the play to make it less offensive to the middle-aged, middle-class, family-type Walterdale patrons. They won't understand the play because they cling blindly to the system of values that Fraser attacks.

For example, upon leaving the theater Tuesday night I heard one of

Edmonton's well-known theater critics comment: "Now that he has gotten this out of his system, maybe he'll be able to write a play."

Well, I'd say to that, "If the system doesn't get anything out of this play, maybe, if we are lucky, he will write another, just as powerful as this one."

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by Michael Dennis Skeet

Rockpile
Seconds of Pleasure
(Columbia JS 38886)



Like a rockabilly hologram, the spirit of the Everly Brothers hovers above *Seconds of Pleasure* (Columbia JC36886), the album that takes Nick Lowe, Dave Edmunds, Billy Bremner and Terry Williams back... way back... to that Golden Age just before Buddy Holly ate the big one.

It had to happen eventually. The past five years in England have seen a steady retreat backwards, as musicians attempt to purify rock 'n' roll by simplifying it. Now it seems Lowe has had his fill of Power Pop and is working out on rockabilly. He has roots in this direction; he was a guiding force in the archetypal country-rock pub band Brinsley Schwarz.

Seconds of Pleasure, which reunites Lowe with Rockpile, is pure energy from start to finish. The songs easily evoke the feel of the late '50s without sounding like direct copies (or indeed without the sappiness of some of the lyrics). The

sound is clean and simple, as opposed to the lush, layered production Lowe usually gives pop material.

There's not a hell of a lot more to be said about this record - certainly there's little to find fault with, unless you're a die-hard rockabilly fan offended at the light-hearted treatment the music is given here. This would make (dare I suggest it?) a great party album...

M
The Official Secrets Act
(Sire XSR-6099)

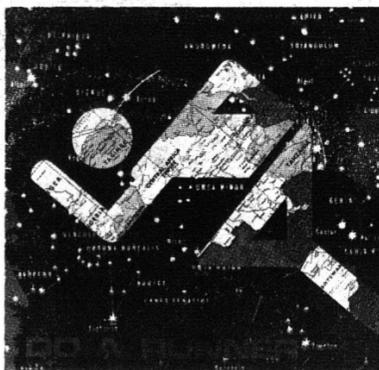
One of the first artists to successfully combine the rhythms of disco with the stance of the New Wave was Robin Scott. As M, he had a hit single *Pop Music*, and a reasonably successful album a year or so ago. A new album has been released, but unless there's a hit single, North American audiences are going to be less than impressed.

The Official Secrets Act (Sire XSR 6099) will probably do quite well in Europe, where electronic music is afforded a better reception. A melange of sounds, effects and competent pop tunes, *Secrets* is best suited to headphones, where Scott's electronic gimmickry can be best appreciated.

Aside from the opening song (in which American and Soviet short-wave broadcasts play off one another over a synthesizer bed that sounds like John Mills-Cockell ten years ago) and the upbeat *Join the Party*, there's little memorable material on this record.

Athletico Spizz 80
Do a Runner
(A & M SP-4838)

If you're saddened by what's become of Grace Slick, and Echo and the



Bunnymen's *Crocodiles* interested you, then you should probably pick up a copy of *Do a Runner* (A & M SP-4838), a new album by yet another English group, this one with the obscure moniker Athletico Spizz 80.

Athletico carry the psychedelic revival even further, the raw lead guitar stopping just short of feedback. The overall sound of this record is lighter than a good many of the acid-LPs of the late '60s, and for that we can be thankful. On the other hand, the band is much more aggressive than, say, the Grateful Dead, so buyer beware (especially those of you who regard *Blues for Allah* as the Western World's ultimate cultural achievement).

This kind of music isn't the sort of thing I can handle in more than the occasional small dose, but I will gladly recommend *Do a Runner* as a more-than-suitable substitute for anything by AC/DC, Judas Priest, Van Halen, or any other of those cottage-cheese bands.

Rough Trade
Avoid Freud
(True North TN-43)

My pick for this week has actually

been out on the shelves for a couple of months now, but I've only just now gotten around to it. *Avoid Freud* (True North TN 43) by the Toronto band Rough Trade, was well worth the wait.

The songwriting team of Carole Pope and Kevan Staples must be considered one of the wittiest in North America, if for no other reason than *What's the Furor About the Fubrer?*, the ultimate in snide cynicism.

The other songs on *Avoid Freud* don't reach that level of cynicism but they're equally powerful. For the most part, the subject is sexual politics, and the subject is handled with a bluntness that may come as a bit of a surprise to some listeners.

As a singer, Carole Pope is a mixed blessing. She has a powerful voice and a style that usually highlights the lyrics quite well. Her posturing is sometimes too much though, and *Victim of Fashion* is less of a song for it. On the other hand, Pope camps her way through *Grade B*



Movie as the ultimate in sleaze, and we all love her for it.

This is a powerful debut, and makes all the posturing done by Toronto on *Lookin' For Trouble* seem kind of silly.