

1707 appeals to audiences of all ages

by George Evans

In an interview with Weldon Bona, artistic director of Theatre 1707, it was revealed that Dalhousie University provided this theatre group with a great deal of incentive in a rather odd fashion.

Weldon studied Theatre at Dal in 1975-76, taking such courses as Theatre 100 and The History of Theatre. When asked if these courses aided the development of his career, he replied, "Not in the least!"

Positive steps in the building of Weldon's accomplishments through the university began when he became totally disillusioned with the Theatre Department at Dal. The major source of discontent at that time for him was that he was not going to be allowed to do any significant directing until at least his 3rd year. In the meantime, he felt that his talents would not only be stagnating, but also be molded into an unthinking stereotype. As Weldon put it, "The University would not give me a chance to be creative."

As a result, Mr. Bona decided to take concrete steps to provide an outlet for some of the more motivated theatre students on campus. As part of a group of theatre students, he was one of the prime founders of the "Theatre of The Ear", which is still in operation in conjunction with CKDU. This provides students with a chance to actually do theatre at the same time as studying it.

According to Weldon, Prof. Lionel Laurence, the current in absentia chairman of the Dal Theatre Department, was responsible for Weldon deciding to attack the theatre profession as a lifetime career. Prof. Laurence reviewed the first play ever directed by Weldon. This was a production of "Dracula" put on in Cape Breton in the early 1970's. After the play, Prof. Laurence said that Weldon Bona should never be allowed to work in any aspect of the Theatre. Weldon's response to this was—"This was the incentive

I needed."

Theatre 1707 opened in early March with an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's "Dorian". This was staged by 1707's resident players, the Bit Players, and the theatre has been operating at full force ever since. Even when there is not an actual production being put on by 1707, they rent space to the various other theatre groups who do not have their own space in which to perform, thus providing a key service to the theatre community in the area.

Most of the material utilized by 1707, although appealing to audiences of all ages, is produced mostly for the enjoyment of younger audiences, especially students. An excellent example of this is the current production of "Bluebeard", a 'sexual-melodrama-horror-comedy-musical' by Charles Ludlam of New York's Ridiculous Theatre Company. This shall run from October 24 until November 4. The best introduction to this play is seen in 1707's press release where Weldon Bona says:

"When I was very young I was taken one evening to see the first play of my life. This play was Bluebeard. Before any other form of entertainment had stained my veil of innocence, not television or movies, I was transformed into a real world hitherto only witnessed in my wildest imaginings. Although this version of the play does not follow that of the original, it takes more to stimulate the imagination of audiences today than the mind of one not yet in kindergarten.

I have attempted to preserve the original Gothic horror elements, but the twist is most certainly on the sexual. In an age which the sexual nature of man has been dissected and examined in all its psychological and physiological pieces and where wildest fantasies are as close as the magazine rack at the corner store, theatre in Halifax has often ignored this and continues to present sexual

issues in a shrouded and embarrassedly stereotypical way.

In 'Bluebeard' we tear away the taboo of sexual perversity and reveal to our audiences what may have been contained in their darkest dreams.

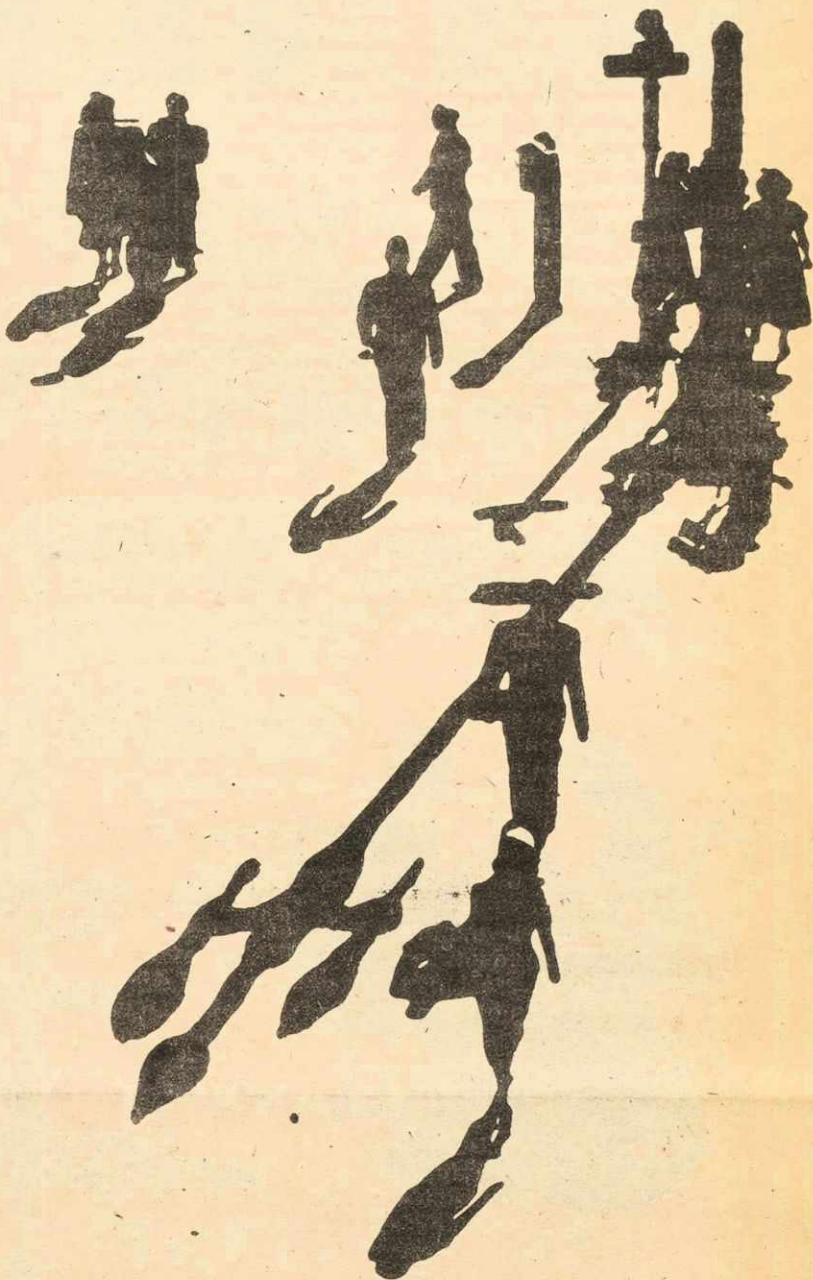
Our attempt is not to shock the morals or offend tender sensibilities, the play is presented in sheer fun."

In this way Theatre 1707 tends to be more risqué than the more conservative theatres in the area such as Neptune. 1707 is also a very dynamic theatre and is continuously on the lookout for new sources of energy.

The Bit Players consists of 9 actors, depending on the number of roles required by a specific play. It is Weldon Bona's policy to try and get at least one new face in each production, so they are, at 1707, eager to get help from interested members of the community, especially theatre students, in the form of actors, designers, technicians, etc.

Weldon feels it is "good for students to get out of the unreal atmosphere of the university. Perhaps it would be desirable to have it a prerequisite of a university theatre program that theatre students are required to have at least some involvement with a working theatre. Students would probably learn more taking part in one production than in a full year of study within the university. Instead of paying a university to provide you with a role, I will pay you to learn more, faster."

Anyone wishing to take part in the work being done at 1707 is invited to contact Weldon Bona at 429-7777. Also, there are acting classes being taught at 1707 by Dennis Brosseau 7 days a week from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Further information on this can be obtained through the above phone number.



Pied Pear enjoyable

by Elizabeth J. Patterson

On the evening of Sunday, October 21, the folk duo, **The Pied Pear**, performed at Odin's Eye Cafe. The audience appeared to be aging flower children searching for a commune. People were more often than not dancing in the aisles in spastic, frantic motion.

The group consisted of Joe Mack on guitar and electric piano and Rick Scott on dulcimer. The instrumental work was beautiful—clear and crisp, with intricate fingerings and exotic harmonies.

While the music was definitely jazzy-folk, the lyrics of the ditties were closer to punk. One of their numbers included a great rendition of the old schmaltzy "Swinging on a Star".

The lyrics were changed from:

"If you'd rather be a pig than go to school,
You might end up to be a fool."

to:

"If you'd rather play with nuts than go to school,
You might end up being a

fool."

Rick Scott did a great scat job on this piece, and on several more like it.

"Come to the Games" was a cynical account of the Olympics, while "Ming 1" was a jazzy analysis of a dope fiend. All the songs were liberally laced with humour, and the banter in between the songs was also quite effective.

The show was thoroughly enjoyable and well worth seeing.



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