

Sex experts tell it with enthusiasm

by Allison Annesley

The Provincial Museum Auditorium was only half full, with about 200 people, but in view of the \$25.00 a head price, the turnout was good. The somewhat subdued audience had come to hear Canada's foremost experts on marital and sexual relationships. Doctors Beryl and Noam Chernick, who have been married for 23 years, have a sexual therapy practice in London, Ontario.

Noam is a practicing gynecologist, and Beryl has had several articles on sexual dysfunction published in various North American women's magazines. The couple make numerous public appearances, ranging from youth rallies to nursing homes. Together, they have also written a book, *In Touch*.

Despite an early uneasiness present in the audience, the crowd left, buzzing. They appeared to have received their monies' worth.

The Chernicks presented diagrams, skits and sexual, as well as behavioural analyses in their presentation. They dealt with both the specific causes of common sexual dysfunction and the fundamental steps for maintaining a couple's healthy emotional status.

Sexual myths of both the stereotyped fifties and the present were discussed. One of today's misconceptions concerns orgasm. Although orgasm is often *thought* to constitute sexual climax, this is usually not the case. It is the following period of resolution, which is accompanied by an intense feeling of well-being which should be that real climax, the Chernicks said.

Some causes of sexual dysfunction were also explained. For example, the major reason why women fail to achieve sexual satisfaction is that their most sensitive sexual organ, the clitoris, is ignored. A lack of education relating to the function and location of the organ is the reason for this problem, the Chernicks said.

One of the Chernick's most effective speaking techniques was their use of humour. Noam, in particular, had a good rapport with the audience. At one point he asked the audience to move closer to the stage for a better view. When nobody moved, he mentioned that, "research has shown the people with the worst sexual problems tend to sit near the back." Laughter broke out and there was a sudden shuffling toward the front.

Maintenance of healthy emotional attitudes in a relationship is the basis of the Chernick's work.

"Attitudes are important because they contribute to the way we feel. These feelings consist of two types; positive negative. When positive feelings predominate, women and men can be aroused as easily as they would like to be. When negative feelings predominate, men ejaculate faster, thereby lessening the intensity of sex, and women take longer to become aroused," said Noam. Beryl then suggested a solution for a common sexual grievance.

"If either partner is having negative feelings caused by any other aspect of their life, they should discuss these feelings with their mate in a non-sexually related manner," she said.

Beryl explained that the problem can often be resolved by

the couple - often, however, there is no solution in sight and sex can only make things worse. Judgment is necessary in such cases, she said.

A parallel was drawn by the Chernicks between a couple's sex life and their overall communication. The climax that often occurs after orgasm was compared to the happy period that can come, not during, but after a couple's experience of excitement. It is the intense caring and sharing that brings about the greatest feeling of satisfaction in a relationship, they said.

The Chernick's visit to Edmonton was sponsored by D and O Human Consultants, Ltd., an organization run by three Edmonton psychologists.



The Chernicks explaining everything you've wanted to know but were afraid to ask.

Photo Cindy Oxley



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