

PECK THE WOODSTICK

by Kirk Lambrecht

Gordon Pengilly is a promising writer, and a student at the U of A. *Peck the Woodstick* is a good example of his capable, experimentative early work. The play took second prize in this year's Alberta Culture, Youth and Recreation full length adult play writing competition. It was presented by Reader's Theatre on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of last week on the Thrust stage in the Fine Arts building.

The play, in two acts, dealt with the pressures bearing on a young man, Tucker Plunkett, after his father murdered his mother as the result of an argument over him.

The first act had Tucker waiting in a barn for his girlfriend, Carla, to arrive; and at the same time attempting to coexist with Peck, an insane hobo taken up residence in the place. Through flashbacks, Tucker's relationship with the other characters was examined. The full weight of Tucker's guilt feeling was gradually built up,

until at the intermission a fine interest in the outcome of the next act had been established.

The second act opened with the characters and the places of the first act confused in Tucker's mind, until Tucker's conversation with one character is finished with another. This was very dynamically done, as actors on the stage move or freeze according to whether or not Tucker sees them.

This shift in the point of focus of the play -- from the objective characters of the first act to the more subjective characters of the second -- reveals Peck as an older Tucker. The play ended neatly with Tucker's disappearance from the barn while the other actors call his name from the wings.

The play is named *Peck the Woodstick* because of a walking stick Peck carries, and over which Peck and Tucker at one point struggle.

Tucker Plunkett was played by Gerald Reid, I saw the Friday presentation, and Gerald

consistently spoke with a highly emotional quiver in his voice; yet the play spanned through

flashback a period of at least several weeks. This distracted somewhat from Tucker's depth as a character, but an otherwise highly energetic performance kept Tucker plausible. Tucker's girlfriends, Carla and Leslie, were played by Sandy Bombardier and Brenda Leadlay, respectively. Sandy gave a good representation of a down to earth 15 year old with a deep crush on Tucker. Brenda, playing a bitchy whore, was slightly mechanical with her lines. Russ prokopchuk gave a very good presentation of Brady, a morally corrupt, strong-armed policeman. And the strongest acting of the night was given by Frank Moher, playing Peck. Peck was a successful foil for Tucker, and Frank's performance put the play as a whole on firm ground.

Lighting was well used throughout to concentrate the action on one part of the stage.

The play was directed and given a fine interpretation by Audie Lew.

New SUB Theatre

This week marks the beginning of a major change in the operation of the Students' Union Cinema. Beginning with the film *Serpico* (starring Al Pacino), S.U. Cinema will be presenting its entire future program in 35 mm.

One of the first and most apparent differences -- to all film-goers will be the greatly improved picture and sound quality. In part this is due to the greater definition possible with 35 mm, and also the fact that 35 mm. films are only used in professional cinema operations and so receive professional handling, something 16 mm. does not always get.

Mr. Vernon Torstenson, Theatre Supervisor, stated in an interview with *The Gateway*, that to his knowledge the U of A Students' Union is the only one in Western Canada that operates a 35 mm. feature film program at a professional level on a regular basis.

In addition, because S.U. Cinema is an independent operation (as opposed to being a member of a cinema chain), it can offer a wider range of top films than any commercial cinema.

Running a 35 mm. film program is a much more complex task, and, in order to put together the upcoming program, Mr. Torstenson now obtains films from over twelve different distributors. A great deal of difficult coordination is required because films are obtained from both branch and main distribution offices.

Shipping can pose problems and its cost might be greater. Costs for this new type of presentation will increase because the basic guarantee for a 35 mm. film rental is generally higher than that for 16 mm.

In light of the new program S.U. Cinema is offering, and its background organization, it should be noted that according to a 1974 survey conducted by the National Research Center for The Arts, Inc., the average admission price to a 16 mm. film presentation in settings varying

from ballrooms to meeting rooms, in the United States, ranged from \$0.75 to \$1.00.

During the months of November and December, S.U. Cinema will be presenting such films as, *The Nine Lives of Fritz*

the Cat; Clockwork Orange; The Last Detail; Godspell; Bananas; Last Tango in Paris; Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams; Lady Sings the Blues.

Mark Macklam

Chief Dan George

With the Citadel's regular lunch-time programs moving into high gear, and already showing record audiences, the theatre will mark its Fall highlight in this special series of events next Wednesday, November 6th, by featuring one of Canada's most famous actors, Chief Dan George.

Dan George will be reading from his latest book, *My Heart Soars*, which has just been published, and tells of his rich experiences through life. He is probably best known for his appearance in the Authur Penn film, *Little Big Man* (his most famous line in the play is the title of his new book), in which he played Old Lodgeskins. It was this part for which he was nominated for the 1971 Academy Award as the best supporting actor.

Since *Little Big Man*, he has appeared in many movies, including *Alien Thunder* and *Cancel My Reservation*, as well as being featured in several television films such as the Glenn Ford series, *The Witness-Cades County*, and *Cold Journey*, a 90-minute documentary filmed by the National Film Board of Canada on the Piapot Reservation in Saskatchewan.

Undoubtedly his most famous stage appearance was in George Ryga's *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*, which was first performed at the Vancouver Playhouse, and has since become a famous ballet receiving acclaim throughout the world. The part was specifically written for Chief Dan George.

Admission to the show, which is sponsored by the Citadel Houselighters, is \$1.00 and coffee and sandwiches are 75 cents at the theatre. Because the demand for seats has already been high, call the Box Office at 424-2828. Performance is at 12:15 NOON.

Dance In Canada

Grant Strate, Chairman of "Dance in Canada" officially announced last week that Edmonton has been chosen to host the third annual national "Dance in Canada" conference in June, 1975.

"Dance in Canada" was founded three years ago as a national organization to represent and promote dance

Serpico

This weekend Students' Union Cinema presents *Serpico*, Starring Al Pacino, Tony Roberts, John Randolph and Jack Kehoe. Al Pacino's past performances include *The Godfather, Panic In Needle Park* and *Scarecrow*. *Serpico* is directed by Sidney Lumet (Anderson Tapes, Fail Safe, The Pawnbroker), and is based on the story of Frank Serpico, former New York City policeman, who was rated Enemy No. 1 by his fellow officers. *Serpico* also features music by Mikis Theodorakis.

rock notes

Temptations

Most of a decade has passed since singer David Ruffin left the Temptations to pursue what he thought would be a highly-successful solo career. Unfortunately for David, his career has seen more downs than ups. The only big hit he has come up with as a soloist was "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted" way back in 1966. As a Temptation, David sang too many hits to count.

But David Ruffin hasn't given up. He has just re-signed a long-term contract with Motown and has put together a new stage act which he debuts this week at Hollywood's Whiskey-A-Go-Go. David also has cut a new album, the title song from which expresses his professional determination. The L.P. is called "Me 'n Rock 'n Roll Are Here To Stay". Motown is releasing the title tune as a single, and it looks like Ruffin's biggest chance for a hit in years.

Phil Spector

Cher (Bono) has been cutting some new sides with famed producer Phil Spector. An album, "Story of a Woman", is expected to come out of the sessions.

Gil Evans

A new album of Jimi Hendrix music, this time performed by the Gil Evans Orchestra, was released last week. The album is a fusion of Hendrix rock and Evans jazz.

Evans used 18 musicians, plus himself on piano, for the album featuring big band/jazz arrangements of the innovative Hendrix' guitar sounds. Songs on the RCA album, "The Gil Evans Orchestra Plays the Music of Jimi Hendrix", include "Gypsy", "Foxey Lady" and "Angel".

Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan's new album -- his eighteenth -- is to be called "Blood on the Tracks."

"Blood on the Tracks" contains ten new songs penned by Dylan including "Tangled Up in Blue", "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go", "Simple twist of Fate", and "Idiot Wind". The album, which was produced by Dylan himself, took only one week to record. In addition to Eric Weissberg and Barry Kornfeld, Buddy Cage of the New Riders of the Purple Sage is featured on steel guitar. It's Dylan's first new L.P. for Columbia in two years and is due out early next month.

Paul McCartney

Paul McCartney's new single, "Junior's Farm", was inspired by and cut during Paul's recent visit to Nashville. However, Paul actually wrote the song while vacationing in Scotland.

The flip side is "Sally G.", which was inspired by Paul and Linda's night out on Nashville's famous nightclub row, Printer's Alley.

The single, from Paul's forthcoming Nashville album, is the first release featuring his new Wings congregation. The new Wings include Jimmy McCulloch and Denny Lane on guitars and Geoff Britten on drums.

Gregg Allman

Gregg Allman, leader of the Allman Brothers Band, has set out on his second solo tour of the year just as Capricorn Records is releasing the live album from his first tour. The two-record set was recorded at Carnegie Hall in New York and the Capitol Theatre in Passaic. It's called "The Gregg Allman Tour."

Warner Brothers

Five popular album covers are currently on a worldwide tour of art museums.

The tour is being sponsored by Warner Brothers Records and its worldwide affiliates. All the covers being displayed are from Warner releases and are considered to be the most artistic in the company's recent history.

They include the Beach Boys' "Surf's Up", Jethro Tull's "Thick as a Brick", John Cale's "Academy in Peril", Todd Rundgren "A Wizard, A Star", and "Richard Greene and the Zone". Although the Richard Green album is no longer in release (as it wasn't much of a hit), the cover work lives on.

The display is currently touring India. Appearances at museums in New Zealand and Australia are scheduled to follow.

Bernie Taupin

Bernie Taupin, the guy who pens all the lyrics to Elton John's tunes, has a new book coming out soon. It's title: "The One Who Writes the Words."

Kiki Dee

Popular for the last couple years in Britain, Kiki Dee is suddenly new in America. Not only is her band touring the U.S. as Elton John's opening act this fall, her single "I've Got the Music in Me" on Elton's Rocket label is suddenly a big hit in this country. Kiki both performs and writes most of her material.