



The Arts Society Exhibition and Sale of student artwork opened in the Green Room Nov. 21, providing an excellent opportunity to drink wine, look cultured, and eat lots of cheese. The artwork was pretty good, too. Photo: Michael Scher.

Four the Moment

By ELIZABETH DONOVAN

Chuckles and laughter are heard coming from the room where *Four the Moment* are rehearsing. The four women are taking a short break from long hours of rehearsals. They are tired and giddy after preparing for the benefit concert at Dalhousie University.

"The group has always had to work hard. New material must be written and we are constantly adding and changing things in the music, while working at full-time jobs," says Jackie Barkley, manager and singer for the group.

Four the Moment is an acappella quartet whose purpose for singing is more than entertainment.

"I want to make a statement and music can reach many more people than other mediums," says Delvina Bernard, a member of the group.

These four women have a lot to say about the discrimination and oppression of blacks and women. Their songs like "Lydia Jackson," "West Hants County" and "Africa-Ville" were written by George E. Clark, a black Nova Scotian poet who writes about the treatment of blacks historically in his poems.

"It's been a mutual exchange between *Four the Moment* and Clark. Putting together his poems and our music we have reinforced each other," says Barkley.

Delvina says their music is an instrument for social change and the origins of the group reflect this commitment.

After the Ku Klux Klan were threatening to organize in Halifax in 1981 a group of concerned citizens organized a rally. Two of the original members of *Four the Moment* provided entertainment and the response was overwhelming. Soon they were asked to perform at other benefits and two more members joined the group.

Since that time *Four the Moment* have been singing in benefit circles for the black, women's and Latin American communities.

Gaining confidence and national exposure through CBC-Radio, *Four the Moment* has ventured outside the Atlantic and has per-

formed in Toronto and Winnipeg.

"The Winnipeg audience was fabulous. We met a lot of people and did a lot of interviews," says Delvina.

Modest about their achievement and popularity, Kim Barnard jokingly says that their audience is usually whoever will listen.

"We've been faking it this long, I guess we can keep fooling everybody," jokes Delvina.

Barkley says the history of the group has been so variable because of people leaving the group for other commitments and has affected their plans for the future.

"We had planned to record an album and do concerts all summer, but recently two members left the

group and this holds us back," says Barkley. "It's absolutely essential we get a fourth singer. We are still looking for a woman who can sing alto or contralto."

Amanda Marshall, the new addition to the group, says she is learning the material quickly, but realizes she works at a disadvantage because she hasn't had the benefit of growing with the group.

Towards the end of the interview the group appears anxious to get back to rehearsing because it's going to be a late night and they've got to wake up early for work. □

Four the Moment performed at Dalhousie Monday, Nov. 26 along with Latin American group Sabia.

Textone need new approach

By SIOBHAN McRAE

The idea behind The Textones seems to be to capitalize on the current resurgence of country music by mixing it with bar band rock and roll. This approach should work but *Midnight Mission*, the group's premiere LP, all too obviously bows to the pressures of commercial American rock trends.

Far too often the listener is reminded just how closely The Textones resemble so many other bands, especially those that have come out of Los Angeles in the last ten years. The fault is partly due to producers Brad Gilderman and veteran keyboardist/writer Barry Goldberg, who don't seem to be aware of the new diversity of production possibilities.

Lead vocalist/guitarist Carla Olson has a good although not exceptional voice which is wasted on largely mediocre material, much of which is written or co-written by herself. Keyboardist/saxophonist Tom Morgan seems to add needless copies of Clarence Clemons sex solos every chance he gets, while other band members (coming from such diverse groups as Bram Tchaikovsky and The Dwight Twil-

ley Band) play solid but mainly faceless back-up roles.

Olson and company tackle some topical issues (acid rain in *Standing In the Line* and derelicts in the title cut) but the commonplace musical treatment deadens the impact. The two songs that come closest to working on the album are *Clean Cut Kid* (an unrecorded Bob Dylan

song about a Vietnam War veteran) and Olson's *See the Light*.

Overall, the band's musical approach is too cautious. Time after time they seem to reach the brink of breaking into something more spontaneous, only to pull back into their MOR sound. This makes for music that is more frustrating than enjoyable. □

Trans-Canada religion

By KIMBERLY WHITCHURCH

The latest entry in the coffee-table book market has arrived in time for Christmas, which is no surprise—Kim Ondaatje's *Small Churches of Canada*. A tidy, well-designed volume, it chronicles the author's five years of travel in search of the quintessential meetin' house.

Even agnostics will be charmed by the homey appeal of this book. The photographs are mostly in black-and-white, printed with a very warm-toned paper that casts an even more nostalgic light on the subject matter. There are some colour photos, also printed with a

All's not well in Illyria

By CHRIS MORASH

"This is Illyra, lady." It sure is. As clouds whip through a brilliant blue sky transforming itself into a storm, Stephen Degenstein's set for the Neptune production of *Twelfth Night* comes alive, and Illyra, land of light and magic, seems ready to come to life. Two and a half hours later, however, it does not seem to have lived up to the inventive potential of the first few minutes.

There are a number of reasons for this, some pretty basic. Director Tom Kerr has placed Shakespeare's timeless tale firmly on a late Victorian stage; everything from the music, to the design of the raked stage, to costuming to the blocking and acting style echoes this motif. I suppose Kerr found something of the tension between stateliness, Puritanism and drunken debauchery in late Victorian and early Edwardian England that suggested *Twelfth Night's* Illyria. Fair enough. The only trouble with this is that the Victorian stage was dead, and Kerr, in playing with these conventions at times strangles the fragile beauty of the script.

Another problem is the sheer number of Gilbert and Sullivan tunes that have been stuck in the play—eleven in the first two acts alone. If you like Gilbert and Sullivan they are well brought off in traditional G & S style, and I'm sure they would make a great revue on their own. But there are so many of the damn things that they bog down the delicate development

of the early part of the play so badly that, by intermission, if you didn't know the plot beforehand your ignorance would remain intact. If anything, a play like *Twelfth Night* needs to be stripped down to its basic dramatic force and magnificent language; there is more than enough there to work with, without cluttering it up with a clatter of high Victorian kitsch.

But don't get the wrong impression; the show isn't awful, and it is in fact worth the ticket price to see David Schurmann's Malvolio. Think of any superlative, and it applies here. From his vain strut, to his trilled "r's" to his dour frown, Schurmann is Malvolio, making every word from the kill-joy Puritan's mouth count. Schurmann does not play him completely unsympathetically, yet at the same time clearly establishes him as a character whose stiff-legged march down the straight and narrow is the antithesis of the other characters' joy in life.

Sir Toby Belch is a great role, and David Brown does the randy old drunk justice, turning in a good solid roaring performance. Just as strong is Simon Bradbury as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, bringing the character and the wit of the language to life. These two, together with Jonathan Whittaker as Fabian, have some of the play's strongest scenes. Indeed, if I were to pick the strongest scene of the show, it would have to be that in which Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian watch from behind a wonderfully ridiculous rolling statue as Malvolio makes a fool of himself reading what he takes to be a love letter. It's a wonderfully funny, wonderfully directed scene.

Yet another treat is Ellen Horst as Maria, that "most excellent devil of wit." Horst's performance is solid, and her voice perhaps the best of the evening, soaring to its full throaty strength in "When a Merry Maiden Marries." It was also nice to see recent Dalhousie Theatre graduate Glenn White showing promise in his professional debut.

In spite of these fine showings, there were some big disappointments as far as acting goes. Kim Coates, whose "Action" in last season's *West Side Story* lived up to the name, was a dud as Orsino. While the love-struck Duke may not have the dramatic potential of Sir Toby, an actor who can deal with Shakespearean speech has plenty to work with in the role; with Coates' high-speed meaningless monotone, the character dies.

While Victoria Snow, who had her moments on *Cabaret*, is not quite as bad as Coates, she doesn't have quite the ear for the rhythm of the language that she needs to bring the character alive. Consequently, the scenes between her and Coates drag on, with no sense of direction. Amanda Hancox, who has done some delightful things at Neptune in the past, is yet another let-down; her Olivia is a mere cardboard cut-out in all but a few scenes.