

Entertainment

"Yonder's the stob."
-Flannery O'Connor-

In a sentimental moog

Roman W. Pawlyszyn

You see a mysterious woman taking petite steps with almost painful deliberation. Her head looks like a straw hut thanks to the hat she is wearing and around her neck is a compact cassette recorder that plays a female voice reciting a somewhat obscure poem about a dog. On her feet are a pair of fashionable rain boots, black with red trim; attached to the toes of the boots are two steel poles which extend vertically to the level of the woman's shoulders. She has a death grip on the poles and uses them to lift her feet as she walks. Is this woman demonstrating new methods of walking on the moon or is she the member of some obscure religious cult?

Perhaps you've seen this lady elsewhere, but if you'd seen her at the Music Gallery last Saturday, you would know that she was part of a concert of works from the York Electronic Music Studio, and this particular composition, by Rebecca Erickson, was a demonstration of just how open the field of electronic music is.

Thanks partly to the free publicity from CFNY, the show was packed. And although there were several pieces which involved live performance, for the most part, the crowd paid for the privilege of

sitting in the dark and listening to pre-recorded tapes. But if the lack of visuals seems like it would make for a boring time, it did not. The other-worldly music was often so intriguing, it was as if the absence of anything to look at helped the mind to create its own visuals.

The compositions ranged from almost-commercial to utterly esoteric. One could almost imagine Campbell Foster's "Go-Bus-Go" on a Gary Numan album, while Rob Bosworth-Morrison's electronic manipulation of T.S. Eliot reading from *Four Quartets* was a little more unusual.

The evening's centrepiece was a 23-minute piece by Phil Werren, head of York's Electronic Music program. Commissioned by Les Grandes Ballets, who will perform the work later this spring, the ethereal beauty of the piece made it seem half its length and had the audience muttering: "How bizarre, curious, strange!"

On Tuesday afternoon, the foyer between Burton and Fine Arts will relinquish its usual role as dead space to the cosmic strains of electronic music. John Puchiele, Campbell Foster and Peter MacDonald—all upper-year students in York's Electronic Music program—will be providing an aural display of some of the

medium's possibilities. Although other students from the program will also be involved, the bulk of the event will consist of a live performance of electronics by the three budding technocrats.

They will be performing from scores that they have composed themselves, although the scores are extremely sketchy and allow for much improvisation.

"The nice thing is that although the music is written down, we are each free to express our own individuality on our instruments," says Puchiele. This is because the notation is graphic and pictorial; there are no key signatures, staves, or even notes as such.

MacDonald offers an example: "The score might present a straight line rising from left to right. This could be interpreted in a number of ways—an increase in loudness, or in pitch, or just in the intensity of what you're playing. It's all up to the musician."

In an interesting role reversal, the musicians will turn to the audience as another source for scores. An overhead projector will be set up and members of the audience will be able to draw whatever they like on it. The musicians will simultaneously interpret the projected "score" using their electronics.

For the record, the electronic



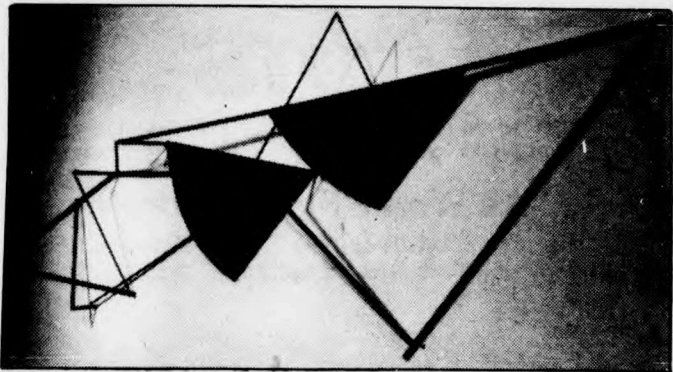
Roman Pawlyszyn

Peter MacDonald demands refund for defective album.

instrumentation to be used will include the following: drum machine, mellotron, Oberheim, ARP 2600, guitar synthesizer and two VCS3's, as well as tapes and tape loops. The musicians want to make it clear however that they will not be presenting electronics as a popular medium—this will not be a Brian Eno/Larry Fast memorial concert. Curiously though, all three count themselves as big fans of Ted Nugent, whom they affectionately refer to as "The

Nuge". If we listen carefully, we might be able to hear the influence "The Nuge" has played on these boys.

Why would they choose to perform in the foyer of the Fine Arts Building? "We want to generate a relaxed environment," says Foster. "We don't want it to be like a band playing for an anonymous audience. People will be able to just walk through and see the kinds of things we work on down in the basement of Steacie."



Anderson Lookin

Sam Krizan's 1979 'Slats' hung sunny-side-up.

Real hot wires

Corinne Mandel

'Connections', at the AGYU is comprised of works diverse in both medium and method. Sam Krizan employs painted steel rods to create wall sculpture, Anthony McAulay works mainly in wood, and David Wright paints in acrylic on canvas.

Yet despite such variety, there is a common denominator. Indeed, Krizan, McAulay and Wright (all teaching at Fanshawe College), all use connective tissue in their respective art, thus the title of the show.

By mounting his linear constructions on a wall, Krizan transforms sculpture into painting. The thinnest of rods are welded together to contain space so that when hung, negative spaces become positive and interact with projecting rods.

In *Slats* (1979), an all black construction, by connecting triangular nodes of both metal rods and sheets, in an under/over connection, positive planes shuttle with negative space and metal rods.

Whereas Krizan's works have an apparent simplicity of form, McAulay's seem much more complex. While adhering to the strict confines of horizontal or vertical, McAulay incorporates an interweaving of painted lines, intermittent wood inserts and incisions and occasional metal

pieces, which combine to achieve a more fluid movement over and through space.

In *Polypore* (1979), a bamboo rod placed vertically contains painted lines which angle upwards, while disks inserted perpendicularly towards peripheries attempt to arrest or detour such upward motion. But the planning is too contrived—the upper half has four painted disks, while the lower half has eight smaller ones with painted edges only. And when combined with directional lines, the natural intervals of bamboo become a welcome imperfection amidst McAulay's austere planning.

Painting on canvas, Wright creates spacial illusion not only by applying pigment, but also by often shaping canvasses and superimposing materials, as pegboard. In this way, Wright tends towards sculpture, as Krizan tends towards painting. In *Blackline* (1979), Wright overlaps high chroma rectangular nodes and a striped motif to achieve spacial intransitivity. The stripes at lower left, for example, project, although rendered behind another rectangle, just as the striped section literally attached from behind the canvas, tends to project.

Thus, while exhibiting a variety of highly cerebral applications to achieve a similar end, the show also proves to be a most satisfying, indeed aesthetic experience.

Bent out of shape

Ronald Ramage

Bent has finally opened in Toronto, and not a moment too soon.

Martin Sherman's text hasn't a single wasted word. His very spare writing hones the blade of the message so sharp, it slips almost painlessly between the fourth and fifth ribs, stabbing deep into the heart and pinning you—transfixed to your seat.

Despite the play's subject matter it is not a plea for gay rights and freedom from persecution, although that is a part of it. It is rather a lesson in moral responsibility.

The play's framework is a pressure cooker—the Nazi persecution of homosexuals and their imprisonment in concentration camps. Director Ernest Schwarz said, "In our research, any horror we imagined, we could find documented. At some point we had to shut it off, and get on with the play."

To survive against these pressures, Max becomes as immoral as his captors. Horst offers Max, through love, a choice for dignity and self-respect. Max takes this choice tragically late.

Sadly, the Toronto production doesn't consistently match the quality of the writing. The only word for Ernest J. Schwarz's direction in the first act is "soft".

The inconsistent quality of the production is clearest in Scene Two. With no small measure of magic, Greta (Sam Moses), a garish transvestite sings the play's theme song, "Streets of Berlin"; redefining the term low-life sleaze. Greta's song sits back-to-back with a flat, nearly dull scene, in which Max, (Richard Monette), making one of his many "deals", extorts money from Greta. From magic to the mundane. In the latter scene, there is no feeling of panic on anyone's part; little of Max's evil baseness.

However, the play's dramatic power is inescapable. When

Max betrays his lover, Rudy (Stewart Arnott), hitting him at the insistence of Nazi guards; letting Rudy die for fear of losing his own life, the audience is stunned into silence.

In the low tension scenes, Richard Monette's acting flirts with the edge of obvious staginess; a risky and not always advantageous place to be. Yet, in a gripping scene, Max revealing how he "made a deal"—raping a just-dead girl, while watched by a roomful of taunting Gestapo soldiers—Monette transcends that border, and becomes a real suffering man.

The second act develops the sexual, and love relationship between Max and Horst (Brent

Carver), until Horst has become the innocent victim of Max's last "deal". Brent Carver's acting is overwhelming. Through the character's uncompromising dignity and Brent Carver's amazing performance, the audience becomes so connected to Horst, that when he is killed, the play feels finished.

Doug Robinson's set is minimalist, yet functional. The costuming is thoughtful, except for the freshly laundered look of the prison garb. (Who ever heard of clean prisoners?)

In the final analysis, *Bent* is incredible classic theatre. But it is the text, not the production that makes it so.

Coriolanus

Long but strong

Robert Fabes

The York Theatre Department's production of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*—clocking in at three hours and 45 minutes—was much too long, but if you were able to sit through the entire show you were fortunate to see the department's finest effort this year.

Neil Freeman's direction was the stronghold of the play. His innovative use of space as well as his blocking techniques made the event interesting and intriguing. Of special note is his manipulation of the secondary cast. These people appeared on stage with such energy that it was largely due to them that the play did not stagnate. Indeed some of the finest performances of the night were from this secondary cast.

Dan Lett, as Coriolanus, was the only big disappointment of the night. The problem didn't lie in his acting ability, but rather a lack of vocal flexibility. Lett yelled the entire time that he was on stage. At times it was merited, but such a high voice level was not needed throughout the show.

One of the best performances of the night was turned in by Monique Verlaan as the Roman senate leader. Verlaan had no trouble with the role, presenting it with a fascinating subtlety. Though at no time blatantly exposing her power, her characterization never allowed one to forget that she is a woman who must be dealt with. Ric Sarabia as Menenius Agrippa also gave a fine performance, with excellent characterization.

Coriolanus was, disregarding the time factor, a fine piece of entertainment. The audience seemed to always be captivated by the action on stage. The play rarely lagged or felt dragged on.

All in all, it was a success and, hopefully, an indication of future performances at York.

*****JERKS*****

The Noncooperation Award this week goes to those members of the *Coriolanus* gang who caused our photographer needless grief. We're only trying to support the York Arts community. Jerks.