

'Theatre beyond words'

by Robin Metcalfe

The Arts Centre calendar describes them as "Canada's finest mime troupe." Fine they certainly are, but the five members of Theatre Beyond Words go far beyond the limits of classical mime. In place of the bare, silent stage, the pancake make-up, the formalized costume of the Marcel Marceau tradition, TBW enthusiastically used sound effects, props, character costumes, non-verbal noises and even speech in their performance at the Rebecca Cohn November 23.

The classical tradition was present, however, in the highly disciplined movements and the attention to detail. This seemed to reflect the guidance of Harro Maskow, artistic director, who also



performed the two solo pieces of the evening. One of these, the delightful "Golfers", was the closest to traditional mime, its only innovation, the use of several white character masks instead of make-up. The other solo piece, "Pilot's Tale", broke with the central convention of mime by introducing a spoken monologue... but entirely in Russian! Concerning the plight of a lost Soviet pilot trying to find his way back to Novgorod, it would have been more effective had there not been Russian-speakers in the audience.

TBW's forte is humour. (The only non-humorous piece "Perspectives", was also the least successful, a sterile exercise.) After a slow



achieved in "Bus Station", a brilliantly-orchestrated ensemble piece. This success was nearly equalled by the play, "Potato People", which concluded the evening with a live rendering of the style of an animated cartoon.

The basis of such excellent production is team-work. However, I must also mention the ability of Paulette Hallich to send an audience into helpless laughter just by walking across the stage in character; as a repressed spinster in "Bus Station" or as an uncannily authentic four-year-old in "Potato People". Equally effective were Robin Patterson's inspired acrobatics as a pre-adolescent brat in the same piece; Terry Judd as the anxious salesman in "Bus Station", Larry Lefebvre as the many-armed sage in "Guru" and Harro Maskow as the brains behind it all.

If I thought that such quality could be maintained on a weekly basis, I'd want TBW to have their own TV show so I could watch them all the time. Move over Muppets, here comes Theatre Beyond Words!

beginning, the troupe had the audience howling by the intermission. Such antics require a much faster pace than that of classical mime, but TBW's timing was impeccable. The peak of the evening was

Musical met with approval

by Cheryl Downton

There is something about the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, *The Sound of Music*, that withstands the test of time. It is recognized as one of the best musical works of this century, and people continue to be drawn to experience its magic. Although it is most familiar because of the movie version, theatre groups continue to stage this production, and audiences return to view the live action.

The Kipawo Showboat Company presented their offering of this musical venture for

local enthusiasts, and the results were not disappointing. The Wolfville based theatre group has been making great strides in the field of entertainment, and as evidenced by the large gathering, theatre buffs are recognizing the strength of the Company which gathers its talent from Nova Scotian artists.

Many of the faces have been seen in other Showboat productions: *Carousel*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *South Pacific*, and *My Fair Lady*. The growth of

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