

# Entertainment

New TWP production

## Trembley's Queen Hosanna reigns supreme

By BOB POMERANTZ

"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all, — shut up!" It is this type of remark that lies at the heart of *Hosanna*, Michel Trembley's study of self-deception — the "Papier Mache" level of existence that many of us know, but few can come to grips with.

At first glance, the play is merely a discussion of the dynamics of a homosexual relationship. *Hosanna* tells the story of a Montreal dragqueen whose dream of coming alive in the role of Elizabeth Taylor's Cleopatra is shot to shreds at a Hallowe'en masquerade party by a group of gay practical jokers. Arriving at home after the incident, Hosanna and his lover, Cuirette try to piece together a relationship which was doomed to fail from the start — a relationship involving two personalities who are foreign to each other and worse, strangers to themselves.

Hosanna, who is brilliantly portrayed by Richard Monette, is a "bitchy broad" — a transvestite who neither knows who he is or where he's heading in life. Monette

captures this character with his limp-wristed movements, French-Canadian sing-song delivery but relies most upon his ability to delve deep within his character to express Hosanna's plight facially — a face fraught with misery.

Richard Donat plays Cuirette, Hosanna's butch lover, to whom she refers as "a cleaning-lady who rides a motorcycle". Cuirette is the perfect foil for Hosanna, an individual who tries to love her but ends up fruitlessly prowling dimly-lit parks for one night stands. Donat succeeds in capturing this character — one whose numerous fears of growing unattractive and undesirable can be counted on the rolls of fat protruding from beneath his leather motorcycle jacket. Like Didi and Gogo in *Waiting For Godot*, Monette's Hosanna and Donat's Cuirette move like a dance team out of time, always working to take one step forwards but two sullen steps backwards.

Bill Glassco's direction is as tight as Cuirette's leather jacket, and just as smooth. He squeezes every ounce of potential from both actors resulting in a performance which

never falters but gradually winds up to a point where the audience moves from ('merely') being entertained to feeling extremely uncomfortable.

The set captures the essence of *Hosanna*, lavishly decked-out but really "Papier-Mache" crap. The purple velvet sofa, reproduction of the nude, David, and especially Cuirette's painting, described by Hosanna as depicting Cuirette's "purple shit stage", all serve to make the setting transcend gawdy to become godless. This condition lies at the soul of the play.

The lighting is crisply executed, working to highlight the moods of Hosanna by employing a variety of black and blue shadings. One innovative lighting effect involves a pink strobe which continually flashes in through the apartment window. It dies out only when Hosanna begins to scrape away the caked-on facade of her existence and come to terms with herself. Only then, can he accept the realities of life — sometimes a cold and unpleasant "trip", but bearable just the same.

Thus, *Hosanna* is not merely "a play about fags". It is a play about every man because its subject matter involves coming to terms with one's self. Regardless of whether Trembley's thrust is primarily psychological (a study of the human identity struggle) or political (a comment on the identity of the Quebecois), the homosexual relationship is a metaphor for a much more universal topic.

On speaking with Richard

Monette, an individual equally as fascinating as the character he plays, I was intrigued most by his explanation of Trembley's theme. "The two people (Hosanna and Cuirette) are stuck in their images of themselves and the externals. They couldn't relate to society but worse, couldn't relate to them-

selves".

*Hosanna* delves into this problem and 'drags' the audience continuously to grant them a greater understanding of the pipe-dream predicament — one which we recognize only too well.

*Hosanna* is currently playing at the TWP Theatre, 12 Alexander St.



Richard Monette as Hosanna

## A schitzoid preview of Styx rock concert

By NEIL JAY BARRATT

"Sweet, sweet sounds will fill the air," and they do. With the tasteful mating of clean, crisp vocal and musical harmonies, the five-piece, Chicago-born band Styx has captured the ears of many Canadian listeners — to the tune of a Gold Record for their first album on A&M Records: *Equinox*.

They are not exactly original, but definitely listenable. No lengthy solos, no forced repetition, just the competence of commercial rock musicians with a flare for producing finely polished studio LP's. The band is now capable of promoting themselves and their music, something five previous albums on the U.S. Wooden Nickel label could not do. Their newest endeavour, *Crystal Ball*, picks up where *Equinox* left off — with a few added treats.

The album is tighter and more evenly balanced, which proves that Styx is willing to work at retaining their following. If *Crystal Ball* is any indication of the band's direction, then their next adventure on wax should be even better. The Massey Hall concert on January 27 could finalize Styx popularity — all they have to do is reproduce their albums' excellence — something they have had no trouble doing at Canadian concerts to date.



Styx appears at Massey Hall tonight, with Moxy as their opening act. Pick the review which suits you better: it's the same band either way.

By SCREECH

Styx stinks — How many synthesizer, guitar, vocal harmony albums do bands like this have to put out before becoming repetitious? The answer — one. Their bubblegum lyrics are a cross between nursery rhymes and passionate telephone calls. Unable to show any inklings of instrumental virtuosity, the boys have gone through every electronic gadget that a good studio has to offer, and the overproduction of their most recent LP's demonstrates their button pushing abilities clearly. They are a musically raucous blend of Uriah Heep, Nazereth and Yes (I say Yes only because lead vocalist Dennis De Young can sing — quite well, actually — and he even shows some fine examples of lyric writing — the best of which are Lyric, leryk and lliric).

*Equinox*, their first album on A&M Records, is almost good, but their second attempt, *Crystal Ball*, reveals that Styx won't be around for long — unless your definition of staying around means bullshit nausea on AM radio.

Strong Points: the only strong point is their knack for sucking the wallets of compassionate Canadian listeners. Oh, second strong point — they aren't disco!

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