



photo Tim Kurbash

photo Bill St. John

Top: Frentiu's costume designs for *La Nuit des Roi*
Bottom left: Sever Frentiu Bottom right: Pierre Bokor

TFE celebrates

by Gilbert Bouchard

Probably the pearl of Edmonton's french community has yet to be the theatre Francais D'Edmonton (TFE)

Often overlooked and always underestimated, the TFE celebrates its 15th anniversary this year.

Located at the U of A's own Faculte St. Jean, the TFE is an excellent way for students of the french language to gain a bit of french culture.

An added treat to the 15th season is the addition of Mr. Sever Frentiu, a noted scenographer and painter from Romania, to the staff at the TFE.

Frentiu has designed the TFE's sets, costumes and posters.

Frentiu worked extensively with TFE's artistic director, Pierre Bokor (also a Romanian native) in Romania. Frentiu is in Edmonton mainly to visit Bokor and in Bokor's own words, "if we had to pay for Frentiu's services we couldn't afford it. In fact the Citadel couldn't afford him."

As a scenographer, Frentiu's work is extensive. He's worked in Romania for over 15 years, and has overseen productions in Hungary, Denmark, Norway, Sudan, France and Italy. Frentiu was in Edmonton from August 12 to Sept. 11, and is now working on a production in Geneva, Switzerland.

While he is a freelance scenographer (not hired by any one theatre), his first career is painting. His exhibitions of his painting have been even more far flung than his theatrical work, with shows in Montreal, New York, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Italy, Turkey, Hungary, Greece Spain and West Germany (among many others).

Frentiu calls himself "a Surrealist, but not too surrealistic." He feels he is more of a new romantic working heavily with symbols. He follows the old masters (Van Dyke, Hans Holbanc, DaVinci) with influences from his studies of french impressionists and modern surrealists.

He has difficulty describing himself, but accepts the label "new romantic" that the European press saddled him with. As he puts it "I'm painting the classics with new symbols that are needed to communicate to modern audiences."

When asked if it was difficult to leave Romania, he replied that it was not difficult to leave if you had a valid reason, and his reasons were always valid, for example working for foreign theatres.

Frentiu said that he works freely: "I'm free inside and out, and freedom is found within men not on the outside."

You can see Frentiu's handiwork first hand when the TFE's first production, a collection of Chekov's short plays entitled *Comediens Malgre Nous* opens October 20, 21 and 25-27, at 8 pm and October 28 at 3 pm.

The TFE's second production if an old favorite, namely *Le Petit Prince* playing January 26, 27 and 31, and February 1, 2 at 8pm. There is also a 3pm matinee on February 3.

Place au Theatre, the TFE's own theatre festival opens in March and features student theatre groups from across Northern Alberta, including the U of A's own *Theatre a la Carte*.

Place au Theatre plays March 12 to 16 at 8pm and March 17 at 3pm.

The season closes with the TFE's adaptation of Shakespear's *Twelfth Night* on the 27th and 28th of April and 2nd, 3rd and 4th of May at 8pm, with a last Matinee at 3pm on May 5.

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