

The headless heroine

BY DANIEL CLARK

Love, hate, murder, death, blood, and confrontation. Mary Stuart is *Reservoir Dogs* in a dress...two dresses, actually. The Dalhousie Theatre Department production of this Friedrich von Schiller classic comes to the Dalhousie Arts Centre next week.

The play dramatizes the final three days of the life of Scotland's Queen Mary (the Queen of Scots). It shows Mary spending her final days in a righteous battle with Queen Elizabeth I — she sentenced Mary to death after 17 years of imprisonment.

Schiller has also written biographical plays about such notable historical characters as William Tell and Joan of Arc. Mary Stuart was originally written in German. The play was translated into English by Stephen Spender. It has been further adapted for the Dalhousie stage by dramaturgy student Sue Sawyer.

Mary herself was a very inter-

esting character. Says Sawyer, "She has always been perceived as a martyr of sorts, because of the way she died. She was wearing all red; a red bodice, a red petticoat, and red sleeves (she had to be killed in her undergarments so that they could see her neck). Red is the colour of catholic martyrism."

There are certain similarities between the life of Mary Stuart and the trials and tribulations of the current Duchess of York (Fergie).

"She (Mary Stuart) married the King of France," relates Sawyer. "He died, and then she returned to Scotland to rule. She was doing a really good job, too. She had an affair with her Italian secretary. None of the Scottish nobility liked her. She had affairs. She even had the red hair. That whole Tudor thing," says Sawyer.

The circumstances around Mary's death get even stranger. When she had her head chopped off, the first blow did not kill her.

Shawyer continues, "The second blow did the trick. When the executioner picked up her head to yell out 'Long live the queen' (of England) it turned out that [Mary] had been wearing a wig...and the head fell out."

Elizabeth was somewhat more pious. In her attempt to lead the English people out of their preceding century of strife she tried to maintain a level of moral and cultural acceptability. Elizabeth encouraged art and music. William Shakespeare's career was encapsulated by her reign. She also maintained a level of moral superiority, objecting to the scandalous philandering of Mary. It is from this that the conflict arises between the two Queens.

Mary Stuart is playing from November 26-30 at 8 p.m. in the Sir James Dunn Theatre of the Dal Arts Centre. There will also be a Saturday matinee on November 30th at 2 p.m. The cost is \$5 for students and seniors, and \$10 regular admission. Contact the box office for tickets at 494-3820.

Acadia's *Diary* revealing

BY DANIEL CLARK

He was a slight man with an almost comical moustache. By no means remarkable looking, although the mere sight of him is enough to bring stifling thoughts of millions of dead bodies.

Adolf Hitler took the world to the brink on annihilation, and sent two families into hiding in an Amsterdam attic. Only the remarkable writings of a young girl survived their incarceration. These writings have been transferred to the stage, and are being presented by the Acadia Theatre Company.

In an ambitious production, a cast of third and fourth year theatre studies students brings the experiences of a young girl to life. *The Diary of Anne Frank* is an excellent production, with realistic performances, staging, and design.

Stacey French, who plays Anne, does an excellent job of initially capturing the energy and exuberance of a thirteen year old girl. Throughout the play she matures and blossoms into a young woman who, although resigned to her fate, has dedicated herself to not being limited by it.

Life in an attic is not easy for the eight people crammed together, but although their moods shift from anger to resignation to fear, the idea that they are *living* is never lost.

There is humour ("Would you shut up, you're ruining the invasion for everyone."). There is joy (eight people huddled together enjoying a sparse but

close Hanukkah). Life goes on, and this play captures that spirit wonderfully.

Colin Bernhardt has done an excellent job in directing this play. My only major criticism is that there is far too much movement on other parts of the stage during dialogue. It is very distracting to see all this movement while watching a dramatic exchange. Freezes might have been more appropriate.

Strong performances are also provided by Chris Sheppard who plays Anne's father, and Stephanie Roach who plays her mother. Keep your eyes on Andrew Bigelow who plays Anne's love interest/confidant.

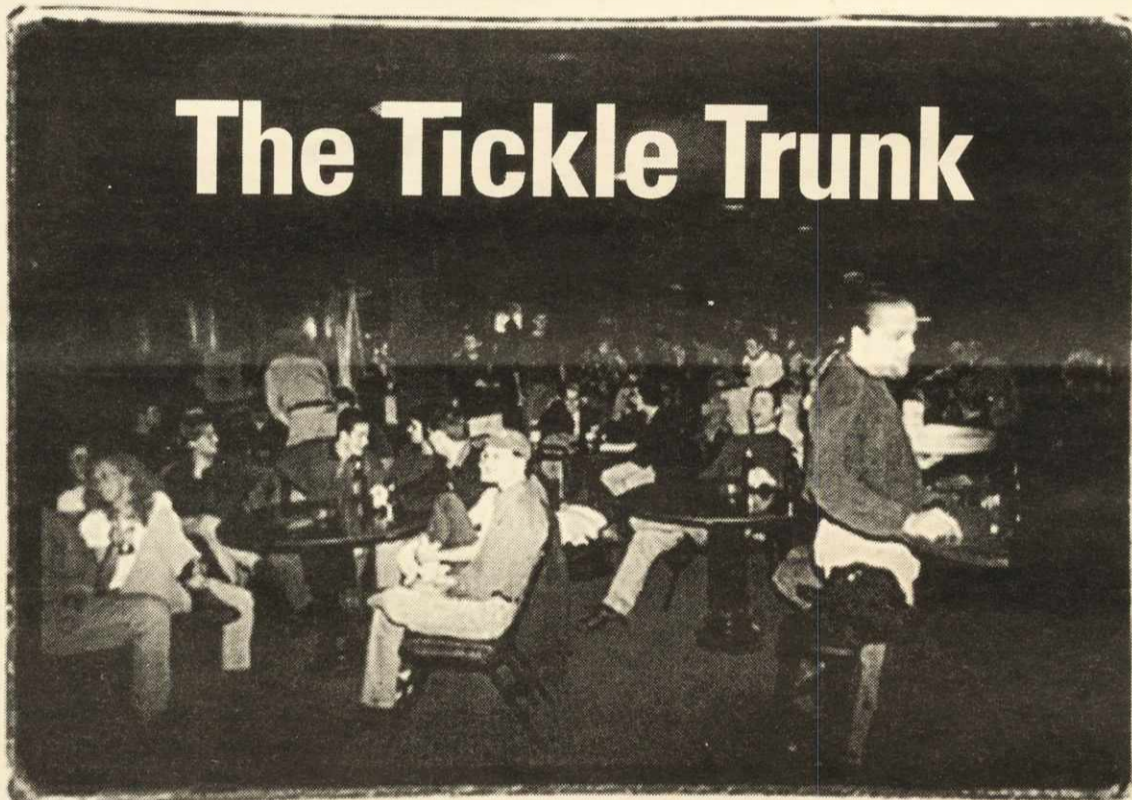
The set and costumes by Sheri Bennett are very believable and give you a strong idea of what it might be like to live in such close quarters with so many people.

Probably the most powerful images are delivered in between scenes. A pair of slide projectors display images of the war and the holocaust while the wind blows and a timpani's slow beat mimics a heartbeat.

The irony in the timing of Anne's capture is best reflected before the final scene when pictures of the invasion and the coming of the allies are superimposed over life-affirming music. Their hope is crushed at its peak.

The Diary of Anne Frank remains relevant to a new generation of audiences, and plays November 21st-23rd at 8 p.m. at Denton Hall at Acadia. It's worth the drive to Wolfville.

PLACES 2 GO



Friday night at "The Trunk" — Where's Waldo?

In an attempt to cover everything, Andrew and I came up with an idea. Why not send people to places they have never been before and check out the atmosphere? Not very new, but a good way to get people interested in something other than Birdland. These places don't have to be bars, just somewhere that people go to get away from the almighty Dalhousie. Relaxation is the key...

PICTURES AND WORDS
BY DAN RAFLA

"If you want to have fun, it's the place to be," says a bar patron named Michelle.

"It's awesome."

It may sound a little hokey, but it is true. Friday nights at the Tickle Trunk with Dale Letcher and Friends are a harmonious affair. With the warmth of a fireplace, the infinite number of board games, the pool tables, and of course, the music — the Tickle Trunk creates a friendly and inviting atmosphere.

"You don't feel pressured to buy drinks. It's conducive to good conversation or dancing, depending on the

night or your mood," said another patron.

Halifax is saturated with large dance clubs that offer loud unrelenting music complimented by cheap drinks and an overabundance of people. The Tickle Trunk seems to be an anecdote for this chaos and insanity.

Last Friday, as I entered the Tickle Trunk and walked down the stairs, I was mesmerized by the magnificent voices of Dale Letcher and Sarah Stevenson performing their rendition of "Walking On Sunshine". I was not the only one captured by their powerful, and at the same time soothing, voices. Comments from the audience

ranged from "nice to listen too" and "alluring and rich" to "simply beautiful." Sarah accompanies Dale for his first set, which begins at about 10 o'clock. The second set introduces Jill as Dale's new partner at around 11 o'clock. Her voice is equally as powerful, especially when singing "Mercedes Benz" by the great Janis Joplin.

The crowd certainly appreciate their talent, as the conclusion of each song was met with cheers from the audience. Compliments abound from those who have come to the Tickle Trunk for the first time, and of course, those who continue to come back. Dale and Friends are

the only group who can sing "The Gambler" and "I Ain't Going to Take it" in the same set, and pull it off.

The music can be danced and listened to, or it can be relegated to background ambience depending on where you sit, or what your pleasure is. If you feel like shooting some stick, head to the back by the bar, where you are never out of ear shot of those groovy tunes. Of course, if it is particularly chilly outside, you might want to sit by the fireplace to warm your frosty hands and toes and your nippy nose over a game of Risk, or chess, or maybe cards. For those of

you who enjoy marginalized games, foosball can be found back beside the last pool table.

The Tickle Trunk can be the perfect place to spend a fun, but relaxed evening. It can also serve as a prelude to the larger clubs downtown. I suppose its best qualities lie in the fact that it is unpretentious, friendly, unique, and most importantly, makes you feel as comfortable as if you were hanging with your friends at home. With this formula, the Tickle Trunk will continue to prosper. Its success can be seen in the large number of people who continue to return — bringing friends with them.



Dale Letcher pumps 'em out with feeling.