

arts

Wondering where the lions are?

by Steve Mills

The premiere production of the Dalhousie Theatre Department is Judith Thompson's *Lion in the Streets*, a darkly disturbing sequence of short scenes with interrelated but often distant characters. As Mary Dickie of NOW magazine put it, Thompson's "power to stir subconscious fears makes *Lion* unsettling, disturbing and fascinating", and director Patrick Christopher has created a visual experience that is true to such superlatives.

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what this play is about as each scene merely represents a fragment of a bigger picture which envelopes all of the characters' lives. Though the scenes are not exactly cohesive, and no resolution is really offered, this is an exciting and satisfying work that begs the audience to try to interpret the message.

The "main" character, Isobel, is the ghost of a young Portugese girl, 17 years dead, who never leaves the stage and oversees the events in an almost angelic way. In the opening scene, she is taunted and ridiculed by the neighbourhood children. She, as well as the audience, experiences firsthand the emotional cruelty of those who, at that age, know no better. From here on, she creeps around the stage in dismay and disbelief as the adult characters experience a rollercoaster ride of emotional turmoil, often displaying similar cruelty towards one another.

Sue barges in on a neighbour's dinner party to retrieve her husband, only to be confronted with the fact

that he is there with another woman. What follows is a bizarre scenario of sexual frustration, fantasy and pseudo-reality that leaves Sue exposed both physically and emotionally in front of her friends.

Rhonda, a pre-school teacher, is pushed over the edge by a group of parents who reprimand her for her methods with the children for whom they themselves do not have enough time. She rants and raves while her grammar regresses to a childish, uneducated time in her life.

help her achieve this end, yet Rhonda insists that it is not possible to achieve such a beautiful death in the present polluted world. The idea that even death can no longer be beautiful is a sad and revealing statement about the modern world.

Religious imagery pervades the play as does the theme of memories that have been lost. Yet when the memories resurface, they are terrifying. This occurs when Father Hayes is forced to confess to David, whose confession he had just been listening

to the streets. With each successive scene, the audience sees that the lion, about which Isobel had previously warned us, is everywhere. It becomes evident that the lion is the streets and everything negative that the streets can represent. It is that aspect of society which preys upon us all and disrupts any beauty or harmony that may exist in our lives. Finally, when Isobel urges us to "have our lives", we hear a desperate plea to

fight the destructive forces that surround us and to find and experience any beauty and love we can find before it is taken away.

The acting in this production ranges from average to excellent, with particular emphasis on James Fowler and Jean Morpurgo. Their portrayals of David, a gay waiter, and Scarlett, a wheelchair-confined cerebral palsy victim, are both wonderful and are alone worth the price of admission.



Michelle MacDonald looks on as Anne-Marie Woods, James Fowler and Mary-Fleur Hanlon portray a dysfunctional adult world

A particularly menacing scene occurs when Joanne expresses her wish to die, as she puts it "good". She describes an image of her poster of Ophelia, drowned in a blue dress with flowers woven through her hair and clear water rushing over her lifeless face. She then urges Rhonda to

to. What results is that Father Hayes dies in David's arms as he recounts a myriad of memories including a butchered chicken and a drowned child, the child he believes David to have been.

As the play progresses, one begins to question exactly what is the lion in

PHOTO: KERRY DOUBLEDAY

Tragically amazing- again

by Bruce Gilchrist

I remember when I first heard The Tragically Hip and I was completely taken with the heavy blues/rock sound of "New Orleans is Sinking". Nobody else was doing anything even close, and it was one of those — Hey Man I was the first guy to love these guys' hard driving sound. And they did not disappoint. *Up to Here* was an amazingly successful debut and the Sea Horse played it every day for two years. It was great.

The Tragically Hip

Fully Completely

MCA Records

Then came *Road Apples* — the Louisiana sound — slower, smoother, and once again great. The problem is that I thought they really couldn't get much better. Every other good Canadian band from 1989 has fizzled pathetically, so I should admit I was a bit skeptical about their new album *Fully Completely*.

The great thing about expecting

something to be only OK is that when it turns out to be good, it's just that much better. Let me tell you, *Fully Completely* is fully realized and strong from start to end. It is the best thing I have heard all year, bar none.

Concentrating on improving their studio technique has brought the feel of composition that much closer — you can tell how they put it together and you can only agree with their fine decisions. The album is a convergent sound of the first two albums and it works to an excellent fruition. The best example is the fantastic song "At the Hundreth Meridian" which combines the quick wailing guitar/heavy bass drum feel from *Up to Here* with the intense feeling vocals found on *Road Apples*. Gordon Downie's fiery vocals are the greatest strength of The Hip, and he probably has the strongest voice anywhere. He also says he has improved his fitting of the lyrics to the music, and I can only agree.

The album's forte lies in its diversity. It features reflection (*Courage*), plain out heavy (*The Werewithal*), Louisiana Blues (*Eldorado*), and a mellifluous country ballad that im-

pressed me the most (*Wheat Kings*). It just comes down to — what comes next? How can they improve?

Fully Completely isn't going to make them US stars, probably nothing will, but they're still one of the best bands in the world regardless, and they put on the best live rock show you'll see in Canada.

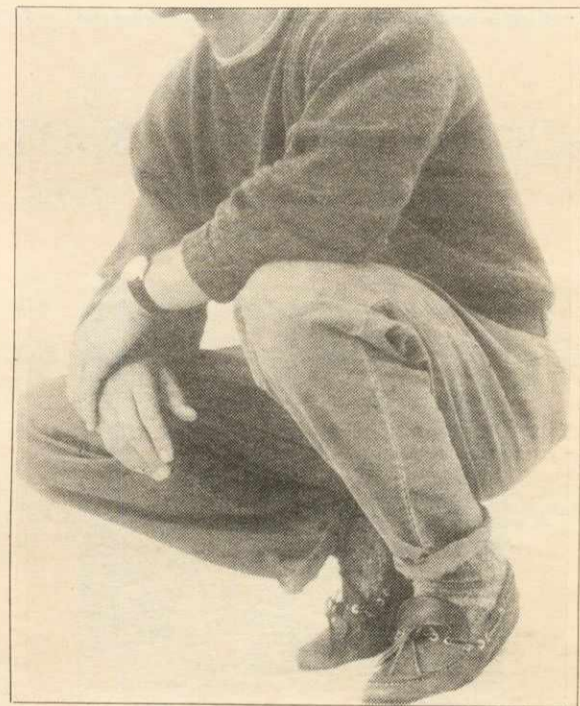
The Tragically Hip will be playing the Metro Centre soon.



FAX US!!

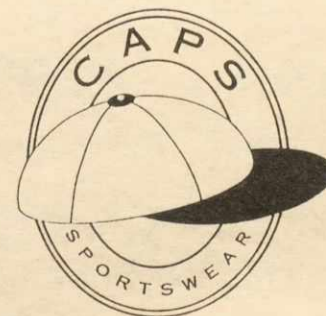
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