

Entertainment

Something a Little Different from Swan Lake...



by Michael Edwards

Each year as part of the Onstage series, a ballet company comes to town; the Royal Winnipeg Ballet have visited the last couple of years, but on Wednesday night a new face hit Fredericton - Ballet Jörgen. Founded in October 1987 by Bengt Jörgen, it is the only choreographic ballet company in Canada and has won several awards during its existence including the Clifford E. Lee Choreography Award last year. It commissions original contemporary ballets, and attempts to aid in the development of new, young talent. And in this week's performance it showed, quite commendably, its vision as one of the more memorable contemporary dance companies I have had the pleasure to see.

Yet we were almost fooled by the first piece which had a solo

ballerina flitting her way barefooted across the stage to the sounds of Chopin. It seemed we could be in for a more traditional evening. But after that the accompaniment went from that of Estonian composer Arvo Part to Billie Holiday to the more avant-garde sound of Schulze, and the dance became more emotive rather than simply 'pretty'. And the pieces became more challenging; 'Untitled VI' followed one character as she rejected her male partner for a female one whilst varying gendered couples formed the backdrop. Another aspect that intrigued me was the amount of very physical dancing, sometimes putting me in mind of Montreal's La La La Human Steps only not quite so violent. No dying swans here. The final piece, 'Land', had the five female dancers echo-

ing the changing landscape using swirling patterns, symbolic stances and subtle changes in the lighting; death and renewal happening time after time.

The dancers were simply excellent - my most heartfelt admiration goes to Claire Gironella, not only for her wonderfully humorous take on Billie Holiday's 'Lover Man', but also for the fact that as the most petite dancer in the company, she seemed to get thrown around the most, albeit in a very elegant way. The other seven dancers included Jörgen himself, who also choreographed three of the pieces including the very moving 'Swedish Songs', a homage to his homeland. A very entertaining and intriguing evening, and a welcome change from The Nutcracker.

Research Centre Series Features New Documentary



When Women Kill, a documentary about women who kill their abusive partners, will be shown on Tuesday, March 22, at 12:00 noon as part of the Family Violence Research Centre Brown Bag Series. The location of the Film Screening will be Toole Hall Room 3.

Featuring the compelling testimony of three women who killed their violent partners, *When Women Kill* goes to the heart of the controversy surrounding women's response to male violence. Writer Ann Jones, who specializes in the history of women and criminal justice, appears in the documentary with Montreal lawyer Sylvie Schirm.

"Male violence continues unabated on the homefront," says director and producer Barbara Doran, citing a 1993 Statistics Canada study which found that 51% of Canadian women have been physically abused by men. The film contains revealing sequences from a counselling session for violent men.

"A shatteringly powerful film... a window onto the realities of women who fight for their lives against all odds. Destined to be a classic," says US author Robin Morgan, while writer Andrea Dworkin calls *When Women Kill*, "an important documentary about the nightmare of battery."

"*When Women Kill* clearly illus-

trates that most women who kill violent partners do so out of self defence, to protect themselves and their children," says Kim Pate, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS). CAEFS is requesting an en bloc review of cases of women incarcerated as a result of the deaths of abusive partners.

When Women Kill is a production of Morag Productions, in co-production with the National Film Board of Canada's Studio D, in association with CBC NewsWorld.

The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research has integrated the showing of *When Women Kill* into their monthly Brown Bag Lunch series, which has previously featured discussions on the impact of family violence on the workplace and the changes to the way the Canadian legal system handles family violence. Associate Director Rina Arseneault says that this series is part of the Centre's ongoing attempt to demystify the idea of research by raising public awareness of their activities. Arseneault says that the Centre's research is community based and emphasizes the importance of identifying and understanding issues as a route to implementing changes to public policy and programs.

The screening of the 47 minute film will be followed by a short group discussion.

The final meeting of the Brown Bag Lunch Series in April will focus on the changing responses to family violence from the community.

A Horse Is A Horse . . . Isn't It?

by Jethelo E. Cabilete

Horses. Sleek, powerful, majestic. Swift as the wind's spirit and proud as the gods. What child has not desired a ride on one of these graceful animals; indeed, many children have experienced this desire as a reality. But, what happens when the reality enters a nightmare world of belief? A world of perverted associations, distorted truths and twisted desire? *Equus*, by Peter Shaffer, tries to answer this question in one manner. Based on a real-life incident that occurred in England several years before Shaffer's writing, *Equus* is a gripping psychodrama of social values, adolescent innocence and sexuality. The narration of the incident to Peter Shaffer compelled him to write a play that interpreted what may have caused a young boy to perform such a mad parody of reality. The characters were created, experts in the field consulted, and final preparations made. The result is a disturbing examination of the relationship between society and the individual.

Performed in London's West End and Broadway's Plymouth Theatre, *Equus* is the tale of a young boy, Alan

Strang (played by Dana Nielson) and his troubling past. A past that results in a grisly crime and culminates in his placement under the care of Dr. Martin Dysart, a psychiatrist (played by Christopher Beazley). Throughout the play, as the good doctor probes for the reasons behind Alan's madness, various truths arise: the overbearing love of a family, the naïveté and lost innocence of a child, the strict control of the social order and the fascination/rejection of religion and sexuality. Interwoven among Alan's recollections and shattering memories, are the beginnings of Dr. Dysart's soul searching. Trying to come to grips with what he, as a psychiatrist, must do, and what he desires to do, Alan's plight forces Dysart to come to terms with what society wants people to be and what they start out as. Like Alan, Dr. Dysart is reined in by forces beyond his control; in Alan's case, the



god called *Equus* controls him, while Dr. Dysart must contend with the god known as Societal Approval. The various truths that emerge from Alan's recollections and the informa-

tion given by different people who knew him, lead him to the final macabre dance with fate that again comes full circle. The psychiatric probing and compassion felt by Dr. Dysart result in a spectacular explosion of self-acceptance and catharsis for the young boy. However, Dr. Dysart's parting words leave bitter and troubling thoughts that haunt the audience for quite some time.

Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Scherf, the technical wizardry of Dan Silk and the hard work and dedication of the cast and crew, Theatre UNB's Scandalous Productions brings *Equus* to Fredericton for four nights, beginning Wednesday, March 23 and ending Saturday, March 26 in Memorial Hall at 8:00 p.m. The casting and plan-

ning began late in the previous year and work started as soon as the November show finished. Costuming was slightly difficult for some of us (especially the horses) and much running around was done by our main man Jeff McGovern. At times we felt that what we were doing was way over our heads, or occasionally were lost in the existential aspect of the roles. However, a demanding professor and hard work brought us through. Truth to tell, some difficulties did arise such as midterms, essays due, noncompliant work schedules and a bout with the flu. In general though, we believe that the audience will find our performance an excellent rendition of Peter Shaffer's masterpiece. *Equus* forces us to look long and hard at ourselves and at the society in which we live. It forces us to ask: How far are we willing to let society surgically remove our passion, our creativity, our individuality? How far will we continue in a bland, "normal" world? How far are we willing to sacrifice freedom of spirit? How far, before Pegasus' wings are clipped forever?

(Graphic by Sang Maier)