



The great escape on the orient express

by Carolyn Smith

On the first Friday of study break, a bunch of us who were not so fortunate as to have enough money to escape Halifax traipsed down to Liu's Qilin Restaurant in the freezing cold in the hopes of a Chinese meal to warm our hearts as well as fill our bellies. And that's exactly what we got. The atmosphere in the restaurant was both intimate and classy without being pretentious. It's a small place with a style that incorporates the red brick of the old brewery and its own unique decor.

Dining Out

Liu's Qilin Restaurant
The Brewery Market
1496 Lower Water St.

Both the food and the service were excellent. There were ten of us, and eight were vegetarian. We shared everything we ordered, so I can comment on a fair number of dishes. We all had spring rolls to begin with, and they were the best I've ever had. They were actually hot and freshly made, as opposed to those heat-lamp affairs one usually gets, and were served with real plum sauce. That was followed with MooShu Vegetable, a huge platter of vegetables served with pancakes.

At this point our waitron attempted to teach us, very good-humouredly, how to use chopsticks with varying degrees of success. Then, in what seemed like an endless succession of dishes, we were served Yu Xiang Chicken and Yu Xiang Vegetable (specially requested), Chicken Almond Guy Ding, Today's Vegetable, Ma Po Bean Curd, Mushroom Fried Rice and Vegetarian Noodle With Liu's Sauce (also specially requested). Steamed rice was compli-

mentary.

Thinking back over the dishes, I

the best egg rolls I've ever had

can honestly say the meal was like none I had eaten before. The por-

tions were generous; the spices were fresh. Dishes were made and brought one after another so nothing got cold. No two dishes were quite the same, although I think we stretched the repertoire of vegetable dishes to the limit! I almost forgot it was Chinese food we were eating, Chinese food in my Halifax experience being bland, greasy and uniform. Our bill worked out to about twelve dollars each for those of us who chose not to imbibe overtaxed alcohol, and it was

worth every cent.

Special thanks to the behind-the-scenes chef(s?) and our very kind waitron who didn't blink an eye when our end-of-exam period insanity hit it's height (we were playing broken telephone and chopstick drumsticks like a bunch of kids).

For those who choose not to make the trek to the Brewery Market, Liu's Qilin Restaurant also delivers for a charge of three dollars on food orders over twenty dollars - call 422-2252.

Theatre explosion hanging fire

by Staff

The organizers of the Halifax Theatre Explosion were forced to delay their planned 13 show festival after arrangements with their venue fell through. After a two week delay the festival will debut at the 3rd Flight Theatre at City Centre Atlantic, 5523 Spring Garden Rd.

"Although we're eager to get the plays up and running, we wanted to make sure that everything in the festival was to the satisfaction of the directors and our audience. Uptown Theatre couldn't guarantee us that," says Michael Melski, Executive Director of the Festival.

"We were aware of some problems other performing groups had with the space, but we believed they had been ironed out in the negotiations with Uptown. Unfortunately, they weren't."

After searching the city for other amenable spaces, organizers approached the management of City Centre Atlantic about hosting a play festival. "They were very approachable. Within a few days we had viewed an excellent venue and signed the rental agreement," says Steve Manuel, Associate Director, "This is in no way a step down from our original venue choice: if anything, it's a superior space with better park-

ing and security."

The decision to delay was disappointing for Manuel, who is also directing the first play, *Baby With the Bathwater*. "I've got a cast and crew ready to perform the work this week. Our two week delay will allow us to refine the piece even further."

Local artists have long bemoaned the lack of suitable and affordable venues in Halifax. With the demise of the Nova Scotia Drama League's Cunard St. Theatre, accessible theatre space has become a scarce commodity.

"The lack of venues is just one of the hurdles performance groups have to vault before getting their work

shown. It's one of the reasons artists in the city should band together into a co-operative similar to the one we're founding," says Melski.

The *mont blanc theatre co-op* is dedicated to making play production easier for emerging artists. "The co-op structure is ideal," says Manuel, "If it can work in such diverse places as Toronto and Mulgrave, why not here?"

The Halifax Theatre Explosion Festival will now be running from March 4th to the end of May at the 3rd Flight Theatre at City Centre Atlantic, 5523 Spring Garden Rd. for more information, contact Mike Melski at 429-0102 or Steve Manuel at 457-7349.

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