

Playwright discusses alternative theatre

Millan: success on stage

by Michael Maitland

Jim Millan's plays are living proof that alternative theatre can be commercially viable, (that is, profitable) and that the artists involved are not a bunch of drug-crazed theatre drop-outs, but rather a group of serious artists who happen to write and produce stimulating, unconventional plays.

Mr. Millan was in Edmonton on March 15 to talk to members of the Alberta Playwrights' Network about the success of his plays and the state of alternative theatre in Canada.

A founding member of Crow's Theatre in Toronto, Jim Millan's plays are controversial, bizarre, intellectual, funny and often sold right out. *Dali*, a play about the history of the twentieth century as seen through the painter's eyes, brought Mr. Millan critical acclaim, and a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Innovative/Artistic Excellence. Followed by *Urban Voodoo*, a black comedy about repressed anger, suburbia, and conservative morality, Mr. Millan is the star in a black sheep genre of Canadian theatre.

What is alternative theatre? According to Mr. Millan alternative theatre is performance in style and innovation. The onus is on the performer as creator of the character.

Mr. Millan is not one who has a history of following trodden paths. He came close to being expelled in his last year at York University as a result of working professionally during the school term — prohibited to BFA students at York.

With a Millan play, as with most alternative theatre, the form and theatrical structure is as important as the content of the script. As a playwright, Mr. Millan is interested in the nature of the performance and often uses free association, as was the case with *Dali*, to dictate the direction of the play.

Dali was presented as a visually graphic autobiography as the painter reflects upon his life. Millan utilized such unorthodox tools as surrealistic singing cowboys, characters who slashed their eyes on stage and scenes involving masturbation, to show Dali's uncompromising courage to fight everything that tried to change him. It is his near mad-

ness that becomes Dali's method of control.

Urban Voodoo is an off the wall, exploratory play that utilizes the central characters, the Blain family, to examine individual destiny and our ability (or inability) to make the choices that dictate the direction of our lives, and the resulting anger that erupts with the realization of being trapped in a self contained suburban prison.

Dali, originally produced with a budget of fifteen thousand dollars, was the success that marked the coming of age of Crow's Theatre. With two runs, sold out houses and critical acclaim, Millan is sincere when he states that alternative theatres like the Crow's are on a developmental threshold. The major barrier which seems to loom larger and larger every year, is money, or a lack thereof. More and more unproven companies are producing new and innovative shows, while governments, especially the federal government, cut back on grants. Where is the Canada Council when you need them?

★

Gateway Staff Meeting

★


Today
4:30 pm.

Room 282 SUB

★

GRADS:
CHECK THIS OUT:
DON WHEATON'S & GENERAL MOTORS COLLEGE GRADUATE FINANCE PLAN

\$500.00 DISCOUNT COUPON
\$750.00 GM FACTORY REBATE*
6 YR./100,000 KM WARRANTY*
48 month terms
Low Monthly Payments



CIERA
stock #210029

SALE PRICE \$14,932.00
Less Discounts 500.00
Less Rebate 750.00


13.5% at 48 mth 370.49/mth

TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE
INC. INT. \$17,783.00

YOU ARE ELIGIBLE IF: YOU'VE GRADUATED SIX MONTHS PRIOR OR BY FEBRUARY 29/1988


Edmonton's **ONLY** Little Profit Dealer

*SELECTED MODELS ONLY
*LIMITED TIME ONLY



10727 - 82 Ave., Edmonton
439-0071

EDMONTON Opera 1986-87




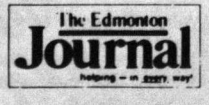

By Puccini
(In Italian with English Subtitles)
March 26, 28, 30 — 8:00 pm
March 29 - 2:00 pm Matinee
Jubilee Auditorium

Tickets available at the Jubilee Box Office, BASS, or charge by phone 451-8000
Edmonton Opera
202, 11456 Jasper Avenue
488-6600


SPECIAL STUDENT PRICES FOR SUNDAY MATINEE!



Students 1/3 off
PLUS
Watch for your \$4.00 discount coupon in the Edmonton Journal

March 11, 14, 16, 20, 21, 23
STUDENTS CAN ATTEND FOR AS LITTLE AS \$3.00

Challenge Cup



University of Alberta


Friday night is campus night with student sulky races

Every Friday night between March 13 and April 10 is student night at Northlands Park. Everyone presenting a student card receives free admission to the harness races.

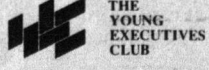
Student sulky racing will pit teams from NAIT against teams from the U of A.

Come see if the U of A is number one in hockey AND sulky racing. Or if NAIT can avenge this year's hockey loss by winning on the race track.

On Campus nights, harness racing action kicks-off at 7:00 p.m. For more information call:



471-7608



432-5036

