

# Le Roi Se Meurt is brought to life

**Le Roi Se Meurt**  
Theatre Francais d'Edmonton  
Feb. 13 - 15 at Faculte Saint Jean

review by Ronald Kuehne

Ionesco's *Le Roi Se Meurt* currently playing at the French Theatre of Edmonton is an exciting thought-provoking production not to be missed.

The plot centers around the death of Berenger I of France and his futile effort to combat the forces of destiny. In the process Ionesco satirizes the established institutions of love, religion, medicine and law.

The director, Pierre Bokor is to be congratulated on the excellent integration of color, sound, lighting, and ritualistic movement in a manner complementary to Ionesco's underlying theme.

Michael Charron, playing Berenger I, must be commended for his sensitive and compelling delineation of the French king. The clear resonant quality of his voice sustains the observer's interest. However, in the scenes where he makes his emotional pleas to the audience, more power of voice and assertion would have heightened the effect.

In the character of La Reine Marie, the symbol of youthful beauty and love,



From left to right: Nicole Bolsten as La Reine Marguerite, Debra Rhine as Juliette and Paulette Desaulniers as La Reine Marie.

Paulette Desaulniers provides striking contrast to Nicole Bolsten, as La Reine Marguerite, the older queen. The two actresses present the budding and

decaying stages of queenship in the worship and admiration of the youth and the satanic score of the elder queen.

The comedy in *Le Roi Se Meurt*

mainly lies in the Chirugien and the guard. The guard is at once a comic character and a social commentator; and Normand Vigneau is versatile enough to integrate his comic abilities with a didactic role. On the other hand, J. Claude Chatelet doesn't seem to be at home in his role. He fails to do much more than merely walk through the play. His native French accent maintains a monotone which hinders him from driving the comedy home.

Debra Phine plays the servant competently enough, except her voice was more that of an innocent child than of a maid who has lived through the death of a husband.

Perhaps what is most suggestive of the theme is Denys Lallier's set. The Web hangs over the play like a fishnet. Later, when La Reine Marguerite compels the other characters to carry out her will, she becomes the spider in whose web all are caught. The throne "for sale" makes death imminent and foreshadows the need for a new successor.

Despite the fact that some of the acting is flawed, *Le Roi Se Meurt* has many attributes. Coupled with the excellent ballet performances and the slow soothing Romanian music in the background, *The King is Dying* is very much alive.

## roundabout

by Michael Dennis Skeet

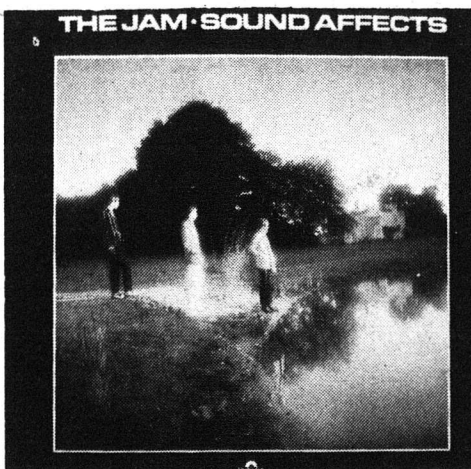
### The Jam

*Sound Affects*  
(Polydor PD-1-6315)

As the crescendo of praise for the Clashes *Sandinistra* (wait til next week, kiddies) builds and builds, a new album by their compatriots (and contemporaries, in every sense of the word), The Jam, has been released almost un-noticed in North America. This is a pity, for *Sound Affects* marks a growing maturity in the band's lyrical stance with no reduction in the early-60s power-pop sound that had everybody calling The Jam 'the new Who' a couple of years ago.

A listener accustomed to the lighter social commentary will be surprised at the hard-driving activism of songs like *Set the House Ablaze*, *Scrape Away* and *Pretty Green*. The frenetic beat has been slowed down for many of the songs, no doubt to let the lyrics come through. The good thing about this kind of political rock, as compared to the message-music I was speaking about last week, is that Paul Weller isn't so much trying to pound a message into you as he's painting a picture and letting you make your own decisions.

This is especially true of *That's Entertainment*, the highlight of the album. Weller writes almost the Eisenstein editor film: short, sharp verbal images are combined together to paint a vivid picture of life in urban England - or life in urban anywhere, for that matter. *But I'm Different* is a love song that should be so easy to write; why songwriters in general persist in feeding us the same old pap song after song is disgusting, not to mention being totally beyond me.



Musically, *Sound Affects* seems to drag a bit when compared with The Jam's previous outings. This may be due to a desire to have the lyrics heard, or it may be the result of a socio-political-induced depression. I suspect that album may take a bit of getting used to.

*Sound Affects* may suffer alongside *Sandinistra*, but this should in no way detract from the record's value. In fact, I venture to suggest that any record collection which contains the one should also contain the other.

### Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark *Organisation* (Virgin/Dindisc VI. 2206)

Orchestra Manoevers in the Dark are another entry in the machine-music sweepstakes. Their debut album last year was diverting, if a bit monotonous. I don't know how much more of this I can take, though.



*Organization* has a promising beginning; *Ecola Gay* is a wierd, catchy number that's macabre (if overdone) enough to make you believe that maybe electronic pop does have some validity. No such luck, though; I find the majority of the songs on this album about as exciting as an economics lecture.

Somewhere toward the end of side one, the album shows signs of breaking out of the mold. *Motion and Heart* (or is it *VCLXI?*) is perfectly kitschy - sounds like a lounge singer with every electronic accompaniment and rhythm-master known to science. The effect is not lasting, however, and by the time Msrs. Humphreys, McClusky and Holmes shout their way through a criminal mutilation of *The More I See You* (not really very funny, lads) you begin to wish that OMD was just a little more poorly-organized.



"What is this?" It's part of Tommie Gallie's "puzzle" on display at the Ringhouse.

## "In Place" doesn't move

**In Place**  
exhibition by Tommie Gallie  
Ringhouse Gallery  
to March 1

review by David Jowett

If brain teasers are your desire, then visit Tommie Gallie's provocative work/installation piece presently on view at the Ringhouse gallery entitled "In Place".

Gallie has utilized the second floor of the building as a "ready-made" to examine and interpret the act of presenting an art exhibition. Much of the work involved in this show took place within the gallery itself. Equipped with wooden planks and an electric saw, Gallie cut and assembled his constructions from unplanned boards cut and wedged into angular arrangements in reference to the furnishing and structures of the rooms themselves. They exist as products of the artist's effort.

Gallie provides the viewer with no documentation of the process involved, leaving us to form an arbitrary opinion. As he receives the boards from the sawmill as end results of one process, so we must accept these constructions as results pertaining to another process. Given the temporary immovability provided by the gallery, these "instalments" belong as bats in the cloisters, enigmatic lodgers to the building's structure.

Once inside, it seems that Gallie was forced to consider the many symbolic properties inherent in the Gallery.

In one instance he has closed off a doorway by placing boards across the frame in a similar manner to a slatted window shutter; entry is impossible, putting the viewer in a strangely voyeuristic position. In another instance he has devised a shelf-like construction which refers to gallery furnishings and also to art objects hung on a wall. In this exhibition Gallie is experimenting to a certain extent and, finding himself with too many balls to juggle, has allowed some to fall to the ground.

Gallie's concern to the process/object dialogue is not a new one: its governing attitude was formalized so succinctly by Duchamp, and its embodiment later is found in Warhol. Working with ideas already consummated by such stalwart figures as these, Gallie will have to seriously consider exactly what his involvement in the issue will be. By taking a too intellectual stance his work will result as a derivative and redundant statement.

Gallie has given us a perplexing riddle, that, unable to be compounded, will provoke questions.

Also on view, in the mainfloor gallery, is the Collier collection of Chinese Folk embroideries. Superbly crafted and fairly austere, they provide the perfect antipode to Gallie's efforts.