

# ENTERTAINMENT

Times a' changing

## Sha na na loses old timing, tight moves

By WARREN CLEMENTS

In 1971, Sha Na Na leapt onto the stage in Tait McKenzie and rattled through all the 50s standards — At the Hop, Rock 'n' Roll is Here to Stay, Teen Angel. They wore gold lamé suits, and the crowd went wild — dancing where they could, stomping where they couldn't, and clapping furiously.

When Sha Na Na returned to the Tait stage last Sunday night, the applause was still furious, but sporadic. The group had switched from a show designed to get the audience on its feet to one designed to be watched and appreciated. In the process, the act gained a few exhilarating showstoppers, but lost a lot of its vital energy.

The Sha Na Na which stormed the stage at Woodstock and tore across campuses in the early '70s with dazzlingly accurate impersonations of Danny and the Juniors, the Shangri-las, et al., relied on tight choreography and three-minute sing-along hits from the past.

The Sha Na Na which appeared Sunday at Tait had lost the split-

second timing which made the early shows such a wonder. And apart from a few opening numbers, most of their songs consisted of brief snatches, opening bars, and false starts. Jocko, the drummer, hosted a funny "top 10" run-down with hits like By, Bye Love (Everly Bros.), It's My Party (Leslie Gore), and the like. A confrontation between two rival gangs had a frustratingly erratic Summer in the City intro and peter Gunn theme as its background. And the medleys flowed like water.

Even the songs had changed. No more At the Hop or Teen Angel. There were Elton John parodies (Crocodile Rock, which changed into Li'l Darlin'), Mick Jagger parodies (Jumping Jack Flash, with a devastatingly accurate Jagger impersonation), and Beatles parodies (Eight Days a Week). Chuck Berry and friends were still in evidence, but one got the impression that Sha Na Na is updating its material to appeal to a 1975 generation which views the Beatles as nostalgia, and the Diamonds as ancient history.



Sha na na in concert last Sunday at Tait.

The headliners' part of the evening, which included a dance contest (with women drawn from the audience) and a running monologue from Sha Na Na member bowzer ("da next guy what calls me ugly gets a knuckle sandwich"), lasted for an hour and a half. The two hours which preceded were split more or less evenly between the American Elliott Murphy and the Canadian rock band Shooter.

Murphy, whose style deviates from second-rate David Bowie to Lou Reed, writes songs which can best be described as unmemorable. But the band was tight and competent, and Murphy had the sense to leave his slow, introspective songs at home and pull out all the stops with his rockers. he came off pretty well, despite the yahoos in the crowd who would have booed even if the Who had walked on stage, such was their

impatience for Sha Na Na.

Shooter, the second act, opened with their hit Long Tall Glasses ("you know I can't dance, you know I can't dance"), during which the male lead singer walked out in a clown costume and disrobed to reveal an immaculate white evening jacket. Now how can you top an entrance like that?

Well, they didn't try. Instead, they called on their female lead singer, Frannie, to belt out Sly's Dance to the Music and Kiki Dee's I got the Music in Me. She was great, and the audience lapped it up, clapping along with much more enthusiasm than Sha Na Na could elicit.



Shooter, the second act.

## Poor chimney sweep Ella, becomes York's Cinderella

By RISHA GOTLIBOWICZ

Last week, York Cabaret presented a musical fable called Passionella. Written by Jules Pfeiffer, it moves like a cinderella story.

Cabaret opened with some satirical 'avriant' news, concerning Dale Ritch, the real issue

of his academic incompetence being a three-year old parking fine; and jokes about Margles Clothing Store in Central Square, Versa-Food, P.E.A.K., etc.

Then, the story of a poor chimney sweep, Ella, who dreams incessantly of becoming a movie star. When her job is gobbled up by automation, she must endure unemployment; her only escape is television.

Besmirched with soot and hunger, she is visited one night by her neighborhood godmother. Ella's dream comes true. She is now a bewitching movie-queen.

Unfortunately, there is one catch, says godmother: the magic works only between Huntley-Brinkley and the late show.

And so Ella becomes Passionella: buxom, blonde, and ahem, buxom, glittering with stardom. She is greeted by a chorus of admirers, who sing her praises. But is she content? No, not without good old prince charming.

Ah, so Flip "the prince" charming arrives in his multicolored hair-do and is a combination of every possible sex star. But he is not bewitched by Passionella: she is not real. He's only tuned into "real" things, and Passionella has a celluloid heart.

Crestfallen, she runs back to the studio, finished with being a cardboard figure on a tinsel background: she wants to be real, desiring to play a chimney sweep. The entire world is stunned, and she is nominated best actress.

Then, Flip and Passionella marry. But at 4:00 a.m. each suddenly becomes ordinary people.

"And we lived happily ever after".

Kevin Fennessy, artistic director, has managed to wring many funny moments from a fun script. Has he avoided the too polite singing, he may have been able to wring a few more.

I found the Cabaret team, a trifle too mannered for a gargantuan farce like this.

## Toiling in caverns, "filmies" surface for air

By IRA MICAY

York students of film work away in their cavernous studio deep in the bowels of Central Square, emerging seldom, and then only with the permission of department chairman John Katz. From time to time, Marg Littlejohn, his secretary, will inform Katz that students appear to be getting restless; on such occasions the department's van is dispatched with Dave Roebuck at the wheel, and the crew of filmies is rushed to the Absinthe where they are injected intravenously with beer.

### SELSUFFICIENCY

Film is so demanding a medium that the York studio is almost a totally self-sufficient living environment. There's always enough white leader around for everyone to eat, and after long hours of editing over a hot moviola, nothing quite hits the spot like cold film cleaning fluid served up in one of those elegant white glasses stored conveniently in round containers found on the floor almost anywhere in the studio.

The fruit of all this toil and hermitage is displayed semi-annually at a screening of the student films for the York public and invited members of the film industry downtown. The fall edition of Everyone's Gone to the Movies was held last Tuesday in Curtis L.

Due to a lack of production funds as well as the often dubious reliability of the crews and equipment available, student films are rarely mistaken for the professional product. Their technical faults become especially obvious when the movies are screened in a large theatre where viewers are accustomed to watching features, like Curtis L with its long projection throw.

### ORIGINAL IDEAS

Experienced but impoverished cineastes usually learn that good art makes its faults seem irrelevant, and instead of producing long films that underscore their lack of resources, most York students have wisely decided to create original ideas that succeed on their concept more than on their execution.

De Jonge's A Bird In the Hand, for which she was awarded the Famous Players bursary given to the pre-eminent graduating student, is a fictionalized documentary about a love triangle involving a woman, her ex-husband, and her current lover. Based on interviews recorded with individuals in a similar situation, the dialogue courageously explores the very particular dissatisfactions that often go unexpressed in relationships.

Dennis Zahoruk, who completed

the filming of his first feature this past summer, directed and played both lead parts in "Jason Borwick" made by him several years ago at York.

John Bertram's comic piece Waiting For The Go, which was awarded the third prize in the scenario category at this year's C.N.E. film festival, stars Bertram himself. In it he diligently keeps amused waiting at an extremely long traffic light, only to be hit by an unseen car when he finally enters the intersection.

Brian Postnikoff's film Slate which he made with Bill Brown, makes fun of the seriousness of some of the more intellectual concepts of film theory by explaining them visually with absurd humour.

### HOTSPLICES

Both Lela Basen's 2-4 Time and Andrew Dowler's Hot Splices attempted more of a commercial feel with a traditional narrative format. In Basen's film a husband confronts his wife about her having affairs, only to be rebuffed by a satire of his impressions of her daily routine. Hot Splices is a short comedy which explores the psycho-sexual dimension of film editing as it's practised at York.

The four remaining films on the programme were all documentaries made in fairly traditional

style.

Ruby Red, produced by Dave Snazuk, was filmed earlier this year in a small town bar in the southern U.S., where Robert Altman's crew was holding auditions for country and western talent prior to his shooting of Nashville.

Steve O'Heron's Erie North Shore features the director's own beautiful colour photography and chronicles the contemporary decline of commercial fishing on Lake Erie through the narration provided by a colorful veteran fisherman.

York mime artist Jeannie Becker is featured in Alix Hoy's Portrait of A Mime; she expresses the frustrations of an artist working in a medium with little commercial potential.

### WOODCUTTING

Antonio Frasconi: Graphic Artist was the last work featured at the screening, but was technically the most proficient. Pablo Frasconi was his own cinematographer in this film made about the woodcutting graphic technique of his father, an artist living in Connecticut. This sensitive documentary has been purchased by the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, and will travel during the bicentennial year in an exhibit of American artists.