

# GUNS 'N' ROSENKAVALIER

by Herschel Marshall

Not being an officianado of the opera, I thought, "what the hell," and went anyway.

I wanted to know firsthand if the opera could stand up on its own to a younger, "less-cultured" individual like myself. It was risky — I lacked the years of proper voice, ear, and hand training that you usually need to enjoy such things. Well, I was patient and I waited, hoping for a god-like revelation. But instead, the score after the final whistle: Visitors 1, House 0.

*Der Rosenkavalier* which played at the O'Keefe Centre June 20-30 was an experience split right down the middle: the music shined but the acting paled. Richard Strauss' score, as performed by the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra was exceptional, and even inspirational at times, but the COC actors on stage were not as delightful. Whether this was due to the actors' inability or because the characters were poorly written

from the start, je ne suis pas certain.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal's libretto (the lines that singers sing to tell the tale) was considered risqué at the turn of this century, but now at the century's tail-end, the plot just seems cute and sentimental. The engaging suggestions of the lewd, lusty Baron von Ochs and the love interest between the 17 year-old Count Octavian and the older Feldmarschallin princess have become the stuff of Harlequin not hellfire.

The expression "boring as nails" crossed my mind a few times. Closing my eyes and blocking out the actors' voices gave me the rest I so desperately needed by the middle of the first act as I tried to hang on to Strauss music for consolation.

Now, I realize you're supposed to experience life as a whole. But breaking things up — music, singing, acting — was a good idea, sort of like shutting out Bono's stupid lyrics while staying tuned to the

Edge's guitar. (Finally, an allusion to youth.)

Except for me, everyone else at the opera looked rich and successful, well-aged, well-dressed, well-mannered and well... exceedingly solemn. Not the same kind of crowd you'd expect at a Guns'n'Roses show — but, hey! — different strokes for all us folks. Perhaps, when I'm older and lose some things and gain some other things, I will cherish opera too.

In summing up, je suis certain that it was my lack of opera-appreciation-training that resulted in this negative review. And the whole opera company and its gracious patrons will hate me (if they ever read this rag) — but, hey! — this would have made a decent album or low-priced CD. I just wouldn't bother with the videotape. Keep your eyes shut tight for that one.

Richard Strauss, being the great anti-establishment-kinda-guy that he was, would certainly have written an anti-opera if he were

still alive today — probably something like Scarborough Surf Punks Do Parliament. The opera taught me

one thing: enjoy youth while it lasts, because the future looks dull.

## New Delhi pavilion was a highlight of Caravan

by Melanie Aguila

Caravan is the only time we can be international tourists for nine days and still stay within the premises of our own country. Throughout Toronto, pavilions had been set up in community centres and church halls representing 35 cities from various countries across the world.

The New Delhi pavilion at 58 Cecil St. was unique because we experienced two cultures simultaneously. (En route to the pavilion we passed through restaurants, stores, and the residential area which make up Chinatown.)

When entering through the doorway of the New Delhi pavilion, we automatically detected the sweet-smelling smoke of incense. Translucent fabrics streamed from the ceiling so that a flow of soft colours waved above our heads. The stage was decorated by a ceramic peacock with authentic feathers (the National bird of India), and the statues of two Hindu deities: Lord Ganesh; and Lord Shiva.

The show included several classical dance forms from differ-

ent parts of India: Odissi (East Coast of India); Kathak (North India); and Bharatnatyam (South India). It was easy just to sit back and observe the fancy footwork, the elaborate costumes, and the visually impressive facial expressions, rather than trying to understand the stories being told through the dances.

Other shows which needed audience participation included a Sari demonstration and a staged wedding. The demonstration unveiled the mystery of how to put on a Sari. A step by step "How to Wear a Sari" pamphlet was provided for those of us with short memory.

Roma Mishra-Jalali, organizer of the entertainment for the New Delhi pavilion and President of the India-Canada Association which sponsors the pavilion, feels that Caravan gives Indians an opportunity to expose others to their traditions and values. "This [Caravan] is probably the only time we can reach out to people who are non-Indian and give them a glimpse of our rich culture and heritage," said Mishra-Jalali.



Soprano Josephine Barstow (right) and mezzo-soprano Delores Ziegler (left) emote in Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*. It ain't Scarborough Surf Punks Do Parliament.

## Good things come in Three

by Kim Yu

*The Three True Loves of Jasmine Hoover*

written by James Nichol  
Theatre Plus Toronto

Toronto playwright James W. Nichol's latest work, *The Three True Loves of Jasmine Hoover*, opened June 15 at the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts. Presented by Theatre Plus Toronto, it gives assurance that Duncan McIntosh, in his inaugural season as artistic director, knows what he is doing.

Directed by Frances Hyland, the play stars Brenda Robins as Jasmine, a woman who decides to change her dreary existence in Don Mills. Living with her chronically depressed father, played by Craig Davidson, only increases her boredom.

One day, Jasmine quits her job at a sleeping pill factory and decides to get her own apartment downtown. Her younger sister,

Beth-Anne, played by Chick Reid, is enlisted to make Jasmine come to her senses.

With all the free time Jasmine has now acquired, she continues to read her engrossing poetry and wander about in search of enlightenment. It comes in the form of a baker, a cowboy and an inventor. She pretends to be three different people in order to impress her respective suitors. Al Kozlik (Joe), Tom McCamus (Willis) and Richard Binsley (Harold) are hilarious.

*The Three True Loves of Jasmine Hoover* is not as dialogue-intensive as its neighbour at the Bluma Appel Theatre, *Love and Anger*. It is brilliantly written, though, and thoroughly entertaining.

Robins gives a strong and convincing performance as a confused, neurotic young woman searching for fulfillment, and her three loves are equally appealing as they court her. Switching from

poet to cowgirl to accountant with equal ease, Robins manages to convey Jasmine's subtle charm with each character change. She maintains the sense of insecurity, but is able to present the burgeoning confidence and enthusiasm Jasmine has throughout the charades.

Also notable is the diverse background of the suitors. They do not come across as stereotypical baker, cowboy or inventor. Chick Reid is superb as the resentful sister, and Craig Davidson is wonderful as the dependent father.

*The Three True Loves of Jasmine Hoover* should not be missed. Its quick wit and comically familiar situations will definitely keep an audience interested and wanting more.

*The Three True Loves of Jasmine Hoover continues at the St. Lawrence Centre until September 1.*



15 year-old Scotia Bhattacharya performs the "pallivi" dance in Odissi style.

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Nitzer Ebb goes nuts  
and Arnie goes to Mars