

# Arts & Entertainment

## Sandra Shamas does her laundry in public

interview by Mark Primmer

She has a house and a garden in Toronto, with a compost heap and a cat in her backyard. She lives a low-key, uneventful life, popping popcorn in a microwave oven and recycling garbage. She's not into gratuity, nor does she find it entertaining. She is Sandra Shamas, and she is the extremely funny writer and sole performer of the Phoenix Theatre's latest production, *My Boyfriend's Back And There's Gonna Be Laundry: The Cycle Continues*.

At 31 years of age, Shamas describes herself as a woman. "Once," she says, "I was a girl, but now I'm a woman." Watching "whacks of television," and sucking magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *New Woman* for her material, Shamas is constantly amazed at the way women are depicted in media.

"I'm always confused when marketing is targeted towards women," she says.

"Some of my best husbands are men."

"Have you seen the ads for Johnny Walker Black?" she asks rhetorically. "The copy reads: He's not threatened that I make more money than him and he drinks J.W. What does that mean; he's gotta be f— well drunk to accept all these things?"

Humorous, not angry, Shamas seizes upon the media's incongruous approach to women. Citing the new Beeman's gum commercial "Girlwatching," Shamas queries the relationship between specific areas of women's bodies, notably buttocks and breasts, and chewing gum.

Live, impromptu and spontaneous degree, Sandra will be giving her audience a four-part performance which includes



Mark Primmer

Sandra Shamas brings her one-woman show to the Phoenix Theatre for the next two weeks. Can she clean up the mess Lana Lust left behind, or would she even want to?

her observations of the media, her life in Sudbury (Shamas hails from the East), and the incongruities of her life, as experienced, one presumes, from the age of 12 to thirty. "I'm a 12 year old trapped in a thirty year old body," she exclaims.

Shamas prefers creating her own material because her experience has been that "material written by men for women always shows men in a much broader light and women in a very narrow laser light."

Asked if she was at all a feminist, Shamas replied "Yes, but I'm not a man-hater. I like men," she says. "Some of my best husbands are men. I can't not like men. I like them — I think they're neat. They're really retentive and I like to bug

them a lot."

"I'm always amazed that men and women get together. We don't have the same vocabulary, we don't have the same reference base," she says. "The men in my life are bright, conscientious individuals who have actually learned female as a second language."

On the down side of the feminism question, Shamas seems consciously aware of the price which women have paid for feminism. "There's no longer that MGM fable of the guy coming up and going: 'Pardon me ma'am, but is this gentleman bothering you?' Men don't look out for women anymore, and I can't blame them."

Noting that the press release warns that her show "contains the entire English vocabulary including the 'F' word," I

asked if her show would offend anyone.

"No, my intent isn't to offend. I'm really interested in reality — not gratuity — that's not entertaining. I have a responsibility as a performer to my audience. I can't jar their sensibility *en masse* and not hurt myself. I'm not interested in turning heads against me."

*The Cycle Continues* is the autobiography ("The names haven't even been changed, because nobody's innocent.") of Shamas's search for love, reality, sanity and a continuation of a work which she debuted at the Phoenix last year, *My Boyfriend's Back And There's Gonna Be Laundry*. The show, which runs until January 29th, plays every night except Mondays and Tuesdays.

## Giesbrecht recital marks 10th anniversary for Con Hall organ

interview by Jennifer Beare

If you're a student who happens to have a class in the Old Arts building you've probably noticed, more than a few times, the swell of organ music emanating from somewhere within. Behind the closed doors of Convocation Hall one finds the source, as 1988 marked the 10th year of the U of A's new Con Hall Memorial Organ.

The organ is a 3 manual (keyboard), 36 stop, tracker action instrument made by Casavant Freres Ltd., a Canadian company. Dr. Marnie Giesbrecht, a recent addition to the keyboard faculty, notes that Prof. Gerhard Krapf, her predecessor and former teacher, was the main consultant for the organ project in 1978. "I feel that the University has been extremely fortunate first of all to have had Prof Krapf, and also to have the organ."

The University organ study program was, for the most part, designed by Dr. Krapf and "because of the instrument, the musical resources, and also the program he (Krapf) has set up together with the University, it is very comprehensive."

In 1988 Dr. Giesbrecht was the first Canadian to receive a Doctor of Music in Applied Music (Organ Performance) at a Canadian university. In fact, the U of A is

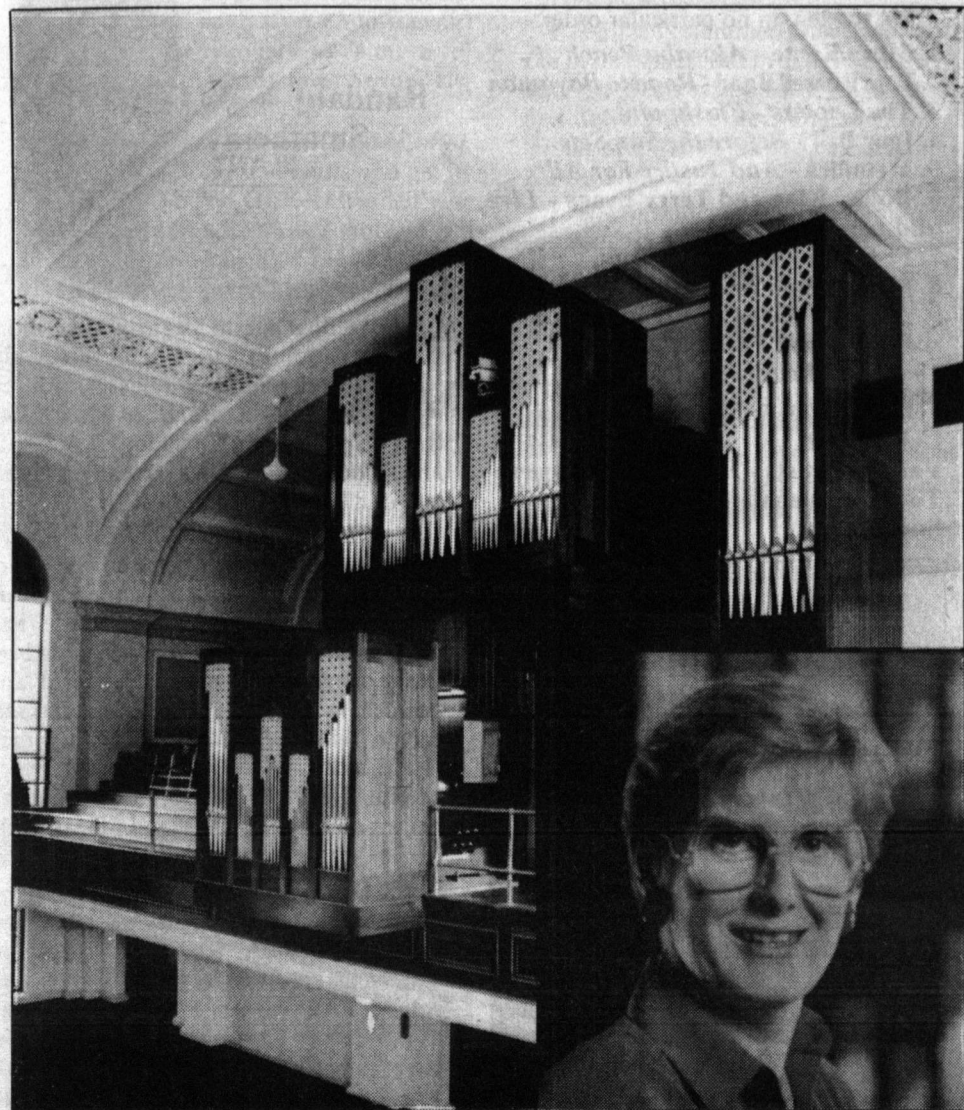
presently the only University in Alberta which offers a Doctor of Music program organ performance.

This Saturday at 8 p.m., Dr. Giesbrecht will perform a recital on the Memorial organ. The concert will provide something for everyone, including works by Bach, Kloppers, Barber, Krapf, Dupre, and Archer.

Regarding this program, Giesbrecht states that "because this is the 10th anniversary for the organ I thought it would be appropriate to play some works by Edmonton composers." Although most of the works are 20th Century compositions Dr. Giesbrecht hastens to add that this should not scare off listeners unfamiliar with recent organ music as the program is "stylistically quite diverse."

Dr. Giesbrecht will also use this performance as an opportunity to show off the colouristic capabilities of the organ with a piece called "Echo Tunes for Organ" by American composer Cary Ratcliff. Through the use of a digital delay, the piece is recorded and played back slightly delayed to create an echo. "What it essentially does is make Con Hall sound like a cathedral," points out Giesbrecht.

Admission to the recital is free.



The organ in Convocation Hall. Inset: Dr. Marnie Giesbrecht will pull out all the stops for her recital this Saturday night.