

Citadel officials reply...

Full condemnation condemned

This is in response to Alan Filewod's article in the Nov. 16 Gateway. It is a defense of The Citadel Theatre but it should be understood at the outset that there at The Citadel you will find many people who agree with some of the points you raise about theatre and are actively working on them. You as a writer, through your lack of research (the writer's primary goal) lost an opportunity to make a strong point strongly, and help the artists and management of The Citadel in our attempts to ensure that theatre reaches as many people as wish to see theatre.

It is fine for a writer to take one point of view and hammer it home; it is in the finest tradition of political writing. But in a small community, such as we have here, we have an opportunity for communication that it is irresponsible not to use.

You used a shotgun on the 'Citadel' as though it were one thing, a monolith, was not composed of people who share concerns with the topics you raise. You ignored so much of what The Citadel is and does and thus destroyed your credibility and lost an opportunity to attack accurately some of the insidious problems that beset Canadian theatre in general and therefore the Citadel Theatre in particular. You chose only to point to one ticket price referring to The Citadel as though it only did mainstage productions.

This is either lack of research or unforgivable proportions in a responsible journalist or an equally unforgivable perverting of truth to suit your point of view.

You say that The Citadel charges \$6.75 and \$7.50 a ticket

but this is not true. The Citadel this season will play to about 114,000 people. Of those 114,000 people, 12,000 will see theatre in The Rice Theatre at \$3.50 per head maximum. Those on fixed incomes or students will get in for \$1.00, \$1.50 or \$2.00 a show. Last season these last named were over 50% of the (as it was then called) Citadel Too audience. (Or are these not the people?) 15,000 of these audience members constitute the higher paying 'elite' but they did not pay the prices you quote either but one sixth under this price.

They support, it should also be known, the people of The Rice Theatre audiences, because we believe in its prices, so that the people can see theatre. They also support, to the tune of \$15,000 last year, our largest audience. This audience pays less than 50¢ per show to see theatre, they are the 75,000 people that The Citadel on Wheels will play to this season. (Or are they, perhaps because of their youth, not the people either?)

That leaves us with the roughly 12,000 people, or one tenth of our audience, who will pay the price you quoted to see The Citadel, but even they will not all have to pay that price. Rush seats are available to pensioners and students at reduced rates. Thus to say that The Citadel charges \$6.75 and \$7.50 a ticket is simply not true.

Before I forget, there will also be in the order of another 8,000 high school students who will see these productions at \$2.00 per head with their schools. (Not the people?)

Moving right along to the 'edifice.' This is interesting, since

it is paid for and one can see who paid for it.

Money came from the donation of the land to the citizens by the city (for \$1.00 per year). Money to the tune of nearly three million was given (at no cost to anyone who didn't want the thing!). The rest came from taxes thus ensuring that those with more money have given more and those with less have given less and those with nothing have been asked for nothing.

Yes, the ticket price for mainstage is expensive. The Citadel Theatre pays its artists (actors, playwrights, directors, designers, etc.) a living wage and production costs are high. One could argue the necessity of

Regarding the article in the Gateway on Nov. 16, 1976, "The theatre needs the people" by Alan Filewod.

I would like to make the following observations: Existing theatre funding exists for the encouragement of theatre, not individual artists, and the theatre's work is produced for the audience. Most Canadian theatre artists do not receive subsidies and only 30% of professional Canadian theatre artists are employed at any one time.

The Citadel Theatre serves more patrons per capita than any other in this country.

You accuse our audience and members of Actors' Equity of masturbating; in my opinion your credibility at this point is destroyed. I have worked with Cedric Smith and his remark is typical of artists who do not exercise their democratic

expensive sets (not counting a living wage for the artisans who build them) (people?) but we also have an inexpensive house with many tickets available and surely you can't wish to legislate against doing an expensive play. (Or we never would see Brecht with a large cast who collectively earn around \$6,000 per week, since The Citadel believes in paying its artists a living wage).

True, the price you quote is high, but some forms of theatre are expensive, unless you want to sell the actor short; cheat him of a living. Luckily at The Rice Theatre we also make theatre accessible to anyone who drinks about three bottles of beer, or two

whiskeys in a week, or who smokes 3½ packages of cigarettes a week. In the week that he goes to the Citadel's Rice Theatre, his theatre will cost him no more than that amount, and if on a fixed income, a darn sight less.

Your blanket condemnation of the 'Citadel' is made from a lack of specific knowledge, based on an unwillingness to communicate and styled like a Peking Poster. I may, to quote the Bard, "Set on some quantity of barren spectators..." however it "Cannot but make the judicious grieve."

Keith Digby

Director

The Citadel on Wheels

prerogatives within their union because they think it is far more clever and facile to issue the witty "put down" than to act constructively.

We are aware of our environment and we are trying constructively to include our neighbours. I am not seduced by the edifice. I have worked in supposed grander and larger theatres than the Citadel and my record shows I have increased audiences markedly both here and in Toronto. I do not discriminate between the so-called elite and the common person, audiences are homogeneous as far as I am concerned, but the realities of society do not escape my vision.

The ticket prices you quote are the most expensive; you do not quote the \$1, \$2, \$3 \$3.50, \$5 prices; you are obviously unaware of these prices or are you perhaps distorting the truth to justify your arguments?

Your comparison between the Citadel Theatre and the theatre in Grand Falls, Newfoundland is ridiculous.

No one here needed to explain why the Citadel Theatre needed new space; the reasons were self-evident to anyone who went to the Citadel Theatre these last few years.

Is it necessary? Yes. Beneficial? Yes. Will it improve the standard of theatre in Edmonton? Probably.

The Canadian people have not rejected the theatre; they are embracing it in increasing numbers every year, check your Statistics Canada figures.

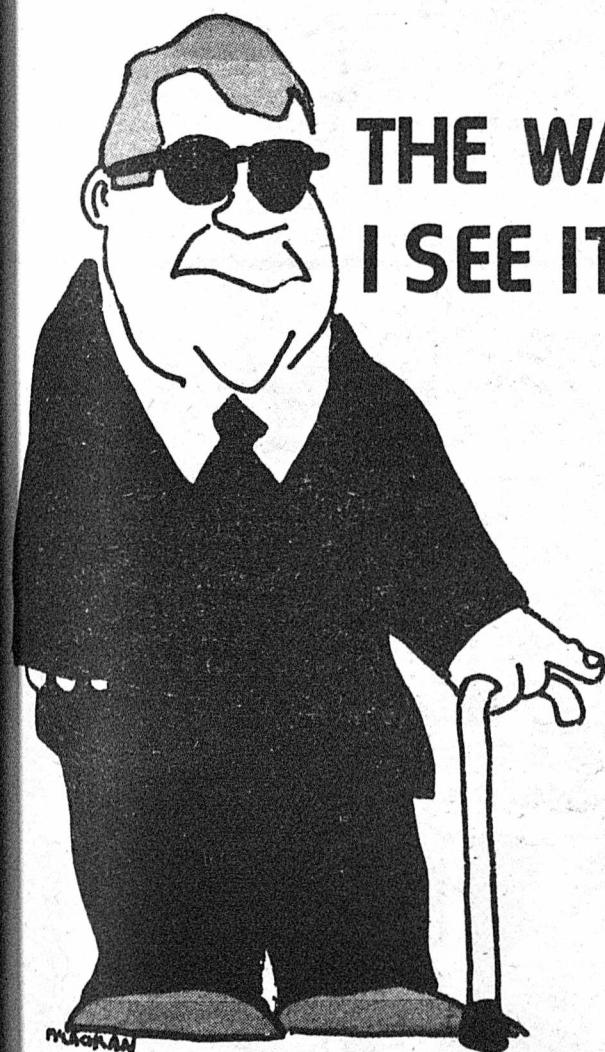
I appreciate what you refer to as "a loyal and vociferous opposition" but in order to maintain your integrity you should not pervert the truth.

Bernard Havard

Citadel Theatre

General Manager

Frank Mutton



THE WAY
I SEE IT

The votes are all in for the Quebec Provincial Election, but the speculation as to why M. Levesque won so handily may go on for some time yet.

I myself know next to nothing about the political climate there, so I went straight to an expert for his opinion.

Paul Desmarais, owner and operator of the **Lamont Grain Pulverizing Centre**, was born in a tiny village in Quebec. He lived there until **Maurice Duplessis** ordered his family deported to Alberta in 1949.

Paul actually met and spoke with Rene Levesque in a pub in Hull, while on a visit there in 1963. Rene had just written the script for a new **Radio-Canada** series entitled **Le Plouffe Famille Goes to Ottawa**, and he was celebrating in the **Pork & Grunt**. Paul casually mentioned that he found the CBC very enlightening, and Levesque promptly knocked two of his teeth out.

M. Desmarais says that this experience made him realize two things about the new Premier — Renee takes his politics very seriously, and he cannot handle his beer.

One other thing mentioned by Paul — M. Levesque isn't the type to take no for an answer on this Separation referendum of him. There's a good chance he'll have English-Quebecers herded across the border into Ontario on the day of the vote, then dragged back to their banks and newspapers after all the peasants have acceded.

I travelled to Calgary on the weekend, and rather than suffer through four hours of the smell of used diapers on the Greyhound, I decided to blow my Journal

travel allowance on the **PWA Airbus**.

Now I've flown with a lot of airlines in my day — **Allegheny, Newfoundland and Trans Canada**, to name a few, but I've never seen any more modern equipment than Pacific Western's **Boeing 737's**.

I noticed one safety feature right away — as we took off from the **Municipal** the tail was dragged on the runway, setting off a brilliant display of sparks. This allowed the captain to see the runway a little clearer, since all the landing lights had blown out. What is really amazing is that it only took ten minutes to put out the resultant fire in the rear baggage compartment.

I had always assumed that passengers on a plane fasten their seatbelts during takeoff and landing to prevent their being jostled about. Not so with our PWA — the tension in all those fastened seat belts is just enough to keep the wings from cracking during takeoff.

The best feature, however, is one that Boeing themselves built in at their Renton, Washington plant — if any malfunctions develop in-flight and the plane crashes, all the seats come loose and the passengers are flung wildly about upon impact. This prevents any lawsuits for whiplash from survivors.

All in all, Pacific Western has done a lot to ensure that their flights are enjoyable for the passenger, and as inexpensive to the government as possible.

If you've watched any of the American networks on cable TV, and wondered why the local cable outfits black out certain commercials, I've got the answer right here.

Milt Scrapshet of **Capital Cable** tells me that the blacked out spots contain commercials put out by **Playboy** and other raunchy magazines to advertise their latest issues.

Cable operators feel that the graphic portrayals of wild sex, so common to our American friends, are perhaps too immoral for staid Canadian audiences.

One commercial for **Hustler**, shown during a recent episode of **General Hospital**, featured **Marilyn Chambers** and her pet **gibbon** in an interesting display of acrobatic excellence, Miss Chambers ended the commercial with ... well, I'd best not say.

A new book on the local market, **A Short History of the Seating Arrangement in Convocation Hall**, has already won the Journal's **Award of Merit** and Mel Hurtig's **We'll Publish Anything** prize. The Author, Barbara Wawanesa, can't understand the book's phenomenal success. **I thought it stunk** were her exact words **Bob Bradburn**, **CHQT's** delightful morning man, will be awakened next week and presented with a plaque commemorating his fourteenth year of **fighting insomnia** over the air The provincial government is denying allegations that there is a heavy drinking problem among **cabinet ministers**. **Peter Lougheed** made the denial after beating his children on the floor of the House and throwing **Helen Hunley** down the stairs.

In closing, keep an eye out for little **Kim Daisy**, who wandered away from home Sunday night and hasn't been seen since. Kimmy is an engineer, so he probably won't last long in the cold.