

ENTERTAINMENT

...music...films...exhibitions...theatre...arts...

Playboy played well

CATHERINE AHERN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

An excellent production by Stage Left, *The Playboy of the Western World* will keep you well entertained. With a diverse cast and crew of both students and professors, there was an interesting range of talent and ideas brought to this production of S.M. Synge's twist to the traditional nationalistic Irish play.

Director Greg Doran, aided by Dramaturge/Asst. Director Randall Martin and Stage Manager Eric Hill, created a hilariously funny production while maintaining the integrity of the significance of the work in its religious and political context. When *Playboy of the Western World* was originally performed in Ireland, there were riots in the audience as a result of its irreverence for the Catholic Church, which was held dear by the Irish Nationalists, who Synge also gave a dish of satire to. In its final version, Synge had self-censored, leaving out some of the more controversial passages he had written in his original version. In this production, Greg Doran and Randall Martin have included some of the original text, returning some of the significance to the play and adding characterization and the sheer entertainment value which Synge had originally conceived.

It was not merely adjusting the script which made this production successful, however, as most of the actors were highly convincing. While some of the minor roles were played by some less experienced actors, the main characters were played by extremely talented people. Most notable is Katherine Atkinson as Pegeen Mike, Matthew Tierney as Christy Mahon and Kathleen Scherf as Widow Quin. Too easily simplified, Widow Quin was given her



Pegeen: not to be messed with.

Judson DeLong photo

full rights as a compelling character by Kathleen Scherf's interpretation of the lonely and driven woman. Katherine Atkinson successfully portrayed Pegeen as a strong character who aptly pushed about the drunkards who surrounded her, all the while entrancing the young Playboy of the Western World. Matthew Tierney did a convincing job of the charismatic boy who comes of age and eventually fills the portrait he draws of himself in the first act, behaving increasingly confidently although surprised at his fortune.

Since it is not an Irish production, it is understandable that the accents were at times less than convincing, though it would have been good if the actors spoke with more consistency. Some actors had accurate Irish accents, while some sounded suspiciously Canadian, and one or two sounded like Scots, others were simply a blend of the three. There was also a lack of consistency in the pronunciation of

certain Irish words which was somewhat distracting. This language problem made it difficult to understand what was being said at times, especially when the actors were short of breath and speaking quickly. Difficulty in understanding was aggravated by the set which forced the actors to speak some lines facing away from the audience, and occasionally blocking made it difficult to see the actor's faces. However, it's still possible to understand the jokes and follow the story line, with little more difficulty than following Mel Gibson's attempt at a Scottish accent or Kevin Costner's attempt to sound British.

Either knowing some of the implications of the play, or merely looking for some entertainment, *Playboy of the Western World* is well worth the \$4 cost to students, especially when compared to the cost of a movie. The play will have you laughing aloud while sympathizing with the characters. At no point will you be twisting from boredom in your seat.

Modabo: stepping to success

PETER J. CULLEN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Any regular pub patron should be familiar with the name Modabo. But although most bar-goers seem to enjoy the folksy blend that the trio has cultivated over the past five years in and around the Maritimes, it's not unusual for crowds to question how long a local group like Modabo can survive. The truth is, you probably won't be seeing Modabo around as much anymore - because they're getting awfully popular these days.

With their East Coast Music Awards appearances in the past two years, Darrell Grant, Jon Weaver and Mike Doyle have gained great recognition from industry types and music connoisseurs throughout the nation. This ECMA year, however, Modabo not only appeared on Breakfast Television during their segment of the Non-Stop 75 Hour Jam, but they also played two sold-out main stage shows as one of the two opening acts for none other than Newfoundland's favourite sons, Great Big Sea. "Oh, we had a great time and were very well received," exclaims Weaver, during an interview a few days after their ECMA showings. "We did two shows that night at the Capitol Theatre; the first was for industry people only, and that was sold out as well. We had heard they were a pretty staid audience, but we did a

twenty-five minute showcase in such an unnatural setting," he continues. "You can do four or five songs, and it's like a test or an exam."

"But you've got to be relaxed and make people feel relaxed," adds Grant. "Yeah," Weaver chimes in. "A lot of people get really stressed out about it. But we feel comfortable out there."

Adds Grant: "We're still not afraid to make fools of ourselves in the time allotted, though."

something that they've sorely been lacking as of late: spirit.

"I think we gathered a lot of momentum [from the ECMA]. We haven't been that healthy the last few months, and for us to have such a great showing has given us a big boost. It's a great shot of encouragement."

The issue of health has been a genuine problem that prevented Modabo's new album, *The Many and the One*, from being completed last year.

In response to how long they've been working on it, Weaver replies, "What are we in '97 now?" (Laughs)

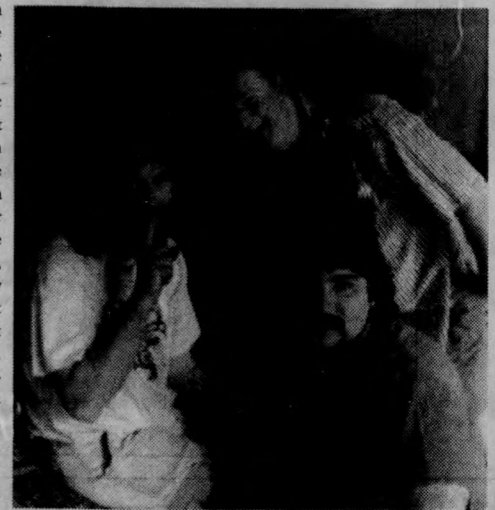
"Yeah, we've had a lot of breaks," Grant states. "And we've had a lot of breaks in our bodies."

Grant is referring to ailments and accidents such as Weaver's forearm, which was broken while snowboarding, and Grant himself has been dogged by illness. Doyle has had the worst luck, however, as he has required surgery a couple of times in the past year.

But the group is apparently back on track. After the recording and mixing processes are completed, *The Many and the One* will stand

as a testament to the hard work that Modabo has invested into their lives and their music since they dedicated themselves to their craft five years ago. "It's been at least three years that we've been full-time [into the music],"

*SEE MORE, PAGE 13



"That's a good point. And a good pull-quote, too," laughs Weaver.

But aside from the exposure, encounters with old acquaintances and meeting other groups to hook up with for future gigs, Grant says that the Award weekend presented them with

Saint John bands are rocking

CHARLES TEED
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The closure of The Local two years ago brought the end to an era of the Saint John underground music scene. Since that time the number of bands in the area has diminished, and the bands that have been around haven't had a place to perform.

However, the musical talent from Saint John is reemerging and forming some of the best bands that have ever come from the area. The two forerunners of the scene are Amused and Hollow.

Amused may be the newest band to the Saint John scene, but drummer Mike Belyea and guitarist Scott Wallace have been around for a long time. Both were in the hard rock band Trap, a fairly popular band in the Saint John area. However, the departure of vocalist Alex Thorne and bassist Brad Bustin led Belyea and Wallace to change their name and sound, and to add Cameron Stewart and Mike's younger brother Matt on vocals and bass, respectively. "We went through every bass player in town before we asked Matt to join," laughs Mike, "I don't know why we didn't get him in the first place."

The band describes themselves as "new school heavy metal," which means, according to Mike, "a mix between alternative heavy metal and hip hop."

Anyone who has heard them would agree that this is an accurate description. Stewart sings, screams, and raps over the rhythmically intense music to create a very original sound. "We can't really describe who we sound like," quips Mike, "we're nobody meets nobody."

Although Amused has had some success as of late, winning a battle of the bands in Fredericton, the band can't see themselves making it big in Saint John. "If you're not acoustic and you don't have a fiddle, you can't play anywhere," says Scott. "Also," adds Mike, "there's no venue for our type of music in this region." They also believe that many of the other bands are not supportive of each other. "It's too competitive around here," believes Matt. "Every band looks out for themselves instead of joining together like they should."

However, despite all of the obstacles, the band still has serious plans for the future. A tape/CD is in the works as well as a summer tour. But, laughs Mike, a small tour. "Anywhere we can hitchhike home from."

Hollow is the veteran of the Saint John underground music scene. Formed by bassist Peter Short and guitarist Chris Wilcox, Hollow has always strove to be an original band.

"Me and Chris wrote stupid little songs at first," states Short, "but we started writing originals right off the bat." The band solidified its lineup with guitarist Tony Noudin, drummer Dave McEwen, and lead vocalist Dave Griffin. "I saw Dave one day and walked right up to him because he looked like he should be in a band," laughs Short. "He thought he was a bass player, but I convinced him he was a singer."

Hollow sees promise in the Saint John music scene, but, like the other Saint John band Amused, has problems with it. "We have some great bands, but there is no place for these bands to play," states vocalist Dave Griffin. "And it gets kind of competitive trying to get on the bill of a show because they are so rare." Short adds, "If you want bar gigs around here, you've got to conform. We were going to do side projects just to make money because it is hard for an original band to get gigs around here."

The band has a lot of things in store for the upcoming year. "Lots of new songs, and hopefully a tour as far as Ottawa," states drummer Dave McEwen. Short adds, "Our main objective is to make better music, and to spread our name around somehow."

If the band keeps playing as well as they do now, it shouldn't be a problem.

Luke, Han and Leia: back again 20 years well worth the wait

JAMIE BROWN
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Well, as I'm sure all of you have known for awhile now, the *Star Wars* Trilogy is back in theatres again. This year marked the 20th anniversary of the release of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, the fourth movie in the series. This may be confusing, so I'll explain it. The trilogy that we all know and love is actually the second trilogy in a series of three. There are a total of nine episodes, with this trilogy being the fourth, fifth and sixth in the entire collection. The third trilogy has yet to be written, but George Lucas assures us that he's busy working on the screenplays for the first three episodes (the prequels). These are expected to be released as films within the next five years. The first film (titled: *The Beginning*) should be in theatres sometime in 1999, while the third film's release is expected somewhere around 2002.

Having been a *Star Wars* fan since I first saw the films more than ten years ago, I was anxious to see them in the theatres with the big screen and big sound, for the first time. The new footage and special effects in the film were only an experience-enhancing bonus. If your sole reason for seeing the films again is the new additions, expect to be disappointed. Apart from the new scenes - which are each barely

more than a minute long - the effects are pretty subtle. However, I must admit, I got a kick out of seeing an impressive Jabba The Hut walking around with Han Solo in the docking bay in Mos Eisley. Some additional effects in *A New Hope* include much needed touch-ups on the spacecraft as well as explosions that are all the more realistic.

The new effects in the second segment of the trilogy: *The Empire Strikes Back* are equally as subtle. They involve the same details as the first, including re-done spacecraft and touch-ups on "Cloud City." Most impressive was the scene with the snow-creature on the ice-world of Hoth. The new effects made the scene seem so much more alive and believable. Despite having seen it more than twenty or thirty times, the scene was still just as effective as if seeing it

for the first time. And it was great to see Yoda on the big screen. I found that his parts in the film were more interesting than on my little TV (It's hard to explain). However, once again, the additional effects are minimal, and if they're your only reason for paying the eight bucks then you're going to be disappointed.

This Friday is the re-release of the third segment, *Return of the Jedi*. Needless to say, I'm looking forward to it. I won't mention any of the new effects because I don't want to ruin the surprise.

Star Wars has embedded itself into our popular culture. No other series of films has had the same effect. The re-release of the films is a real treat for not only *Star Wars* fans, for everyone who have yet to see them. It's really quite an experience, seeing it on the big screen for the first time.



Know Where To Go?

• The Beaverbrook Art Gallery
Saturated Fields: Colourfield Painting in the Permanent Collection, and Exotic Foreign Locations, on display until March 16

• UNB Art Centre presents *Common Ground* (clay works by Craig Schneider) and *Tempting Fate* (paintings by Phillip Iverson) at Memorial Hall. Now - Sunday. Illusion of Barrier, the UNB art club, and Showcase '97, featuring UNB and STU students. On display Now - Mar. 30. FREE. 453-4623.

• Kelpfest 2. Rye's Deli and Pub, performances by Space Cadet, 3 foot 7, Answida, Rock Plaza, Hercules, and Steaming Toolie (releasing their new album "Deliciously Sucky"). \$3, 9:30pm, Friday March 14, 1997.

• First Thursday Jazz Series, Joel Leblanc Quartet, guitar. River Room, April 3, 8:00pm. Free. 1-888-622-5837.

• Stage Left presents *The Playboy of the Western World*. now - March 15.

Memorial Hall. 8pm. \$5. 447-3078.

• A Spring production of *Waiting for the Parade*. \$7.50 for adults, \$5 for students. Black Box Theatre, St. Thomas. Nightly, 8pm March 18 - 22.

• *Here on the Flight Path*. Dinner and Theatre. Phone 451-7936 for details.

• New Brunswick Museum presents *Jewels of France* at Market Square in Saint John. Now - Apr 30/97. Also *Folk Art, Transitions: The Paintings of Peggy Smith, Peter Pouning, Elemental Clay and Glass, and Egg-stavaganza* now on display. (506) 643-2300.

If you have an event you would like to publicize, send all relevant info to "Know Where To Go?" c/o *The Brunswickan*. Submissions can be sent via fax (453-4958), or by e-mail (brun@unb.ca). Or simply drop off your information at *The Brunswickan* office, located at Room 35 in the SUB.

CD reviews

Steaming Toolie
Deliciously Sucky
Independant

Fredericton's own Steaming Toolie has released the much anticipated debut CD *Deliciously Sucky*. At over 70 minutes in length, this album manages to sound like everything from Sloan to Hayden to Change of Heart to the Rheostatics. An excellent effort, it is sure to reach rave reviews across the country.

The first single, "Traffic Jam", is a softly sung, slow-moving song that catches your foot and makes it patter. The video for this song is almost completed, and lead Toolie, Jon Bartlett, describes it as "bizarre."

Although all of the tracks on the album are of equal quality, the best has to be "Charlie Brownish". This is the lead track, and also the longest. An instrumental song, it peaks with the Chicago-esque horn section that was added to the middle.

An excellent album, it is definitely worth picking up at one of Fredericton's fine music stores. Steaming Toolie appears tonight at 9:30pm at Rye's Deli and Pub with a host of other bands in support of this album.

• Anthony Davis

Riki Gee
Lonely City Cowboy
DROG

Lonely City Cowboy is a very folksy album, with easy going lyrics and soft melodies. It is a truly Canadian album in that it feels Canadian, not by excessive singing of a national anthem, but by some sort of subtle gut feeling. It is really nice to feel/hear this.

Riki Gee (acoustic guitar, fiddle and lead vocal) is a true folk artist, and his distinctive voice definitely leaves that impression. Like another great Canadian folk musician, Leonard Cohen, Gee's lyrics concentrate more on the poetry of words than the screaming that so many singers use to project themselves. The simple way he uses his voice seems to be a way of telling people to accept, or at least not to regret.

This album seems like it would make an excellent driving album. It features constantly changing jazz/folk/country/rock beats, and with the all star cast of supporting musicians on the album, it seems guaranteed to help you get a long drive done. Notable tracks include the title track and "Everybody Fits."

• Anthony Davis



Helmet
Aftertaste
Interscope

Helmet is the classic 'good old boys' with the original, heavy, stop-start, hard rock sound. This album carries on with characteristic snappy drum beats, prominent base and flowing guitars but with a slight twist on the vocals. The lyrics remain unique in that they steer away from blood/death most common to this type of music and Helmet sings about a pessimistic outlook on the world. Of the thirteen tracks on the CD "Like I Care" is the best, with its great lyrics "It always feels good to be right/ and if it helps you sleep at night, I'll tell you what you want to hear/ and act like I care." The songs "Easy to get bored" and "Pure" also stick out above the rest, although all of the songs are really well done. This album hits the stores on March 18.

• Mark MacDonald