

YAWHO throws a benefit concert

By KEVIN PASQUINO

The spirit of helping others still exists at York University and this Saturday night York Artists Who Help Others (YAWHO) are presenting a show for charity at Burton Auditorium.

This is the second year that YAWHO has been in existence. Last year's show, which was composed of more than 40 cast members who were mainly first year music students, attracted an audience of 200 people, but expectations are high for an even greater turn-out this year.

Learning from last year's errors, steps have been taken to insure a more financially successful show this year. All the show's proceeds this year are going to the Columbus Centre Special Children Program and their summer camp program for developed mentally handicapped children. Because of this worthwhile charity, there has been special emphasis placed upon making sure that the behind-the-scenes costs are taken care of before the show starts.

YAWHO chairperson, Judy Dalume, is quick to recognize the assistance which the organization has received from various York sources and how the show would not be possible without their support.

While the show was presented in

McLaughlin Hall last year, this year it will be at Burton Auditorium. The enormous cost of renting Burton has been picked up by Office of Student Affairs and Dalume hopes the new setting will entice more patrons.

Vanier College Council and the Music Department's student council (through the Creative Arts Boards) have also aided YAWHO in their efforts. The costs of advertising, tickets, and sound and light technicians are being absorbed by the councils with the hope that their contributions will lead to a stronger show.

While the behind-the-scenes support has been present, it was up to the YAWHO council to arrange for the acts in the show. Last year the program consisted mainly of enthusiastic first year music students, but this year's show has participants from all year levels at the department. The show has four bands, but their talent is recognized both inside and outside of York.

The first band to sign up was Still Life. The lead singer of the group, Densil Pinnock, appeared in last year's show and when asked to appear with the rest of his group, they eagerly accepted.

Other bands include Particle Zoo (see Andrew Vance's article on p. 15) and The Risk. Rounding out the night is Louisa, who will be backed

by York musicians in her performance.

Both Louisa and The Risk were tracked down by off-campus publicity agent Simon Elkund who also arranged for publicity of the show on CITY-TV and radio stations such as CJRT and CKFM. These stations, like all of the performers, have all given their time and energies to the show free of charge.

While this is only the second year that a benefit show has been organized by YAWHO, Dalume is certain that the shows will continue, but she would like to see other departments get involved as well.

"We're hoping the show will become interdisciplinary," Dalume says, and she hopes that YAWHO can mount "a full-scale production rather than just a concert. (YAWHO's future role will be to unify the departments and make it a more interesting and varied show."

But as Dalume speaks of her hopes for the future, she is very excited about the present show. "This year was much smoother due to the commitment of the YAWHO council and the recognition from last year's event."

The four band event will start at 8:00 p.m. this Saturday, March 14. Tickets are \$6.00 and are available at the at the door or from the music department.

Zaniness in a Particle Zoo



JUST ZOOIN' AROUND: The band members of Particle Zoo gather for a lovely photo. From left to right, we've got: The framed Dave Sermon, Don Bull, Colin Campbell, Anne-Marie "Robin" Hood. And up top is Andy Stochansky. And yes, the enigmatic Dr. Bones is absent.

By ANDREW VANCE

Friday night, 10:30 p.m. The bouncer at the El Mocambo has never heard of a place called the Fallout Shelter, thank you very much, so it's somewhat surprising to find it practically next door. Stairs rise to the second floor and through a door, bohemianism lives.

The cafe is awash with innovatively garbed people, their attention focused on the recitations of a slightly brain damaged looking poet whose name nobody can remember. The atmosphere is vibrant and artsy but becoming increasingly restless, awaiting the arrival of Toronto's Particle Zoo.

The long wait for the band however, turns out to be worth it.

The first set is varied and complex, amalgamating music, dance, and poetry into an audio-visual experience that alternates between driving rhythms and more brooding, introspective passages. Noteworthy pieces include "Song of the Both," a haunting adaption of Bertolt Brecht's poem set to music, and a send up of "Whole Lotta Love" which has the Zeppelin song develop into a cacophony of scattered drums and voices. It is heady stuff and one leaves The Fallout Shelter with the feeling of excitement that comes from being part of something dynamic and new.

Sunday afternoon, 5:30 p.m. The members of Particle Zoo (guitarist Colin Campbell, drummer Andy

Stochansky, keyboardist/bassoonist Dave Surman, vocalist Anne-Marie "Robin" Hood, resident poet Mr. Bones and absent bassist Don Bull) have agreed to an interview and, forsaking the crowded By the Way Café, we settle across the road in the less preferable but more comfortable interiors of The Other Café.

The band members are amiable and the conversation quickly turns to Friday night's performance as I enquire about their poetic opening act. "That guy? . . . Some weird asshole," laughs Andy Stochansky. Dr. Bones offers similar insight about the anonymous poet. "He's definitely insane . . . and a bit self-absorbed," she ventures.

The spontaneity and humour between the group's members is immediately evident as they talk. But the chemistry has not been easy to achieve and the saga of Particle Zoo from its beginning to its current line-up would seem to echo the quest of many groups searching for the "right" combination of performers.

"I was playing with Dave in a band called Indoor Games," explains Stochansky, a student at the Ontario College of Art, "and I met Colin through an ad. Dave met Robin through their interdisciplinary (fine arts) studies at York." With the nucleus thus assembled, attempts to find additional members sometimes involved inviting members of the audience to jam with them. The exercise had obvious drawbacks. "We were true to our

name," Stockansky says, "it was a zoo on stage."

With the eventual arrival of poet Dr. Bones and bassist Don Bull, the line-up was complete. The band played for the first time at the Kensington Carnival in July 1986 and has remained together in the words of Surman "as a disciplinary collective."

By this point in the interview, I have the band members' names mixed up, prompting the acid-tongued Mr. Bones to enquire whether I would like a road map. I decline and the talk turns to the subject of influences and artistic objective.

"I used to listen to rock, punk, and jazz when I was growing up, but eventually moved beyond that towards free form," offers Campbell a York music student. "Right now I think I'm most influenced by the use of polyrhythms in African music." Surman also finds inspirations from the East. "I was listening to King Crimson and to what Robert Fripp was doing with Indian rhythms and it was helpful because it was similar to what I was experimenting with at the time," he notes.

Although the group's embracing of a multi-media approach would tend to put them in the realm of pop avant-garde, the group is quick to downplay association with Toronto's Queen Street scene. "Dirge music," grimaces Stochansky, "it's all fashion and fad. Music has almost become secondary. Nobody will listen to you unless you're already somebody."

"What are you trying to achieve," I enquire cautiously.

"Change the world," offers Mr. Bones. Stochansky offers a different reply. "We're trying to make a positive statement, playing stuff we like to play. We're not into negativity," he asserts.

My final question is about the role of the audience and on this point Campbell is adamant. "We need an audience to feed off. The reaction of the audience becomes part of the total experience."

Particle Zoo's concert schedule brings them to Burton Hall in March and to Lee's Palace on April 21. If initial impressions are correct, this is a band of promise with the kind of spontaneity and creative spark needed to rise above the current deluge of pop syntho-garbage. Time spent checking out this band would be time well spent.

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