

# Don Quixote in Neptune Man of La Mancha

by Irfan Mian

Neptune has opened its new season with a very entertaining production of *Man of La Mancha* (written by Dale Wasserman, music by Mitch Leigh, lyrics by Joe Darion). It is a play (or perhaps a better word would be 'illusion') within a play within a play, but one does not get confused. The setting is a jail cell in 1597; the playwright Miguel de Cervantes is placed among thieves and murderers while awaiting a trial by the Inquisition. While working as a tax collector he discovered that a church was not paying its fair share of taxes — and he had the gall to report such

a thing.

Since jail cells were quite bare in the sixteenth century, there are not many props (though there is a scene with blinding mirrors — cover your eyes). Ted Roberts and Pearl Bellesen deserve much credit for the costumes, especially for the extremely creative horses (with one person inside, not two).

The hero and heroine, Cervantes/Alonso/Don Quixote and Aldonza/Dulcinea (the play involves double and triple roles), are played by Brent Carver and Susan Gilmour, and the singing of both is fabulous. Almost all of the other singers also have wonderful voices. The hero's manservant (played by Frank MacKay)

adds humour to this play which I otherwise thought to be serious.

The play is more importantly a musical. The musicians are outstanding and the music (and singing) is very beautiful when it is meant to be — especially for the overture, "Dulcinea", "Little Bird, Little Bird" and "The Impossible Dream". The sometimes see-through "brick" wall which sometimes hides the talented musicians is interesting to note. A serious musical is a rare thing, and if you take home the message that "it doesn't matter whether you win or lose, just that you follow the quest", you will certainly appreciate the play even more.



picasso

# The Deryini odyssey continues

by Irfan Mian

This month, October 1989, is a month for excitement, as Katherine Kurtz's new Deryni novel has been published in its mass market edition. (For the uninformed, the Deryni are, as Kurtz writes in the appendix, a "racial group gifted with paranormal/supernatural powers and abilities".) I have lived through her first three trilogies — *The Legends of Camber of Culdi*, *The Chronicles of the Deryni*, and *The Histories of King Kelson* — plus the Deryni

*Archives*, and have grown to know the characters, to love them, to wish I lived among them, were one of them, to hope that the Deryni are real. I have been pulled into these novels as into no others. The Deryni world is one where the are healers who, using no medicines, "will lay hands on the sick, who will recover" (from the Bible, Mark 16:18), and where the Deryni can travel from one transport portal to another using just the mind.

The newest novel is *The Harrowing of Gwynned: Volume 1 of*

*the Heirs of Saint Camber* and is a continuation of the first trilogy (the second and third trilogies take place about two centuries later). Like the others, this novel is written as if it is history, but the most exciting history you will ever come across. My first reaction was one of pleasure and relief to have the familiar characters back again after waiting for several years. As I read further I was horrified by the descriptions of the persecution of the Deryni by those in power (though I was accustomed to this from the previous novels), and acknowledged that the situation (which occurs many times in their history) is representative of injustices toward any kind of people. "Tongueless, the condemned could not even plead ignorance of the law, or recant, or beg for mercy, as the soldiers piled the kindles high around the rows of stakes and passed among them with their torches" (p. 16). All for praising a Deryni saint, or possible saint, for one of the main stories in the newest novel involves "Saint"

Camber's body and whether he is dead and a saint, or alive and under one of the most powerful of spells (and if so, how to break it).

Kurtz begins each chapter with an appropriate quote from the Bible, and she shows great knowledge of the history of the church. It plays a central part in the stories, and many of the main characters belong to the clergy. But please, do not confuse this for a piece of theological writing.

But before you read this new novel, be warned that you will be seduced into reading them all, so why not just start with the first, *Camber of Culdi*. They will enter your heart and mind and remain there for a long time.



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