

# Miracle Worker not miraculous

By NANCY KEMPTON  
Entertainment Editor

While the TNB production of Malcolm Black's "The Miracle Worker" deserves acclaim, it did not warrant Monday night's standing ovation on the merits of the performance alone. Perhaps the great audience response was due in part to the atmosphere and compassion encompassing the subject matter. The heady social statement of the necessity to free the disabled from the handicap of others' pity, the fact that the script was based on Helen Keller's very real struggles, the association with 1981 year of the disabled, all prodded one's thoughts beyond the realm of the actual play.

As stated, however, when one narrows one's thoughts to the stage performance, there are yet many quality elements identified. The acting of the two major characters, Annie Sullivan (Janet Doherty) and Helen Keller (Michelle Jones) was accomplished with such perfect emotional reactions one believed their relationship encompassed more than the stage facades. Ms. Doherty in particular, communicated so well with motion, expression and spoken words her frustration in teaching a blind deaf-mute to understand language and that fostered by the parents refusal to discipline Helen. The audience could sense sheer exasperation.

Although not a humorous topic, touches of comedy and sarcasm were thrown between the characters to break the tension of watching another suffer repeated defeats in a challenging fight. The entire cast fulfilled their function in this capacity with timely lines of wit and punctuated words. Robert Ouellette portraying James Keller, had an ease with one-liners the rest of the players could not quite match.

Captain and Katie Keller played by Dan MacDonald and Marcia Tratt respectively, did not develop their role relationship until later in the play. The characters were not clearly defined in respect to each other. However, on an individual basis their expertise was evident.

There was nothing drastically innovative about the set or costume design. Both were patterned after the standard southern home in the late 1800s. Fade outs between scenes were often accompanied by background sound effects moving the action from one phase to the next. Such transfer sounds included pounding hooves of horse and buggy, the whistle of a train. While they did explain unseen occurrences, they had a very childish unreal quality, tending to remind one of the old Lone Ranger radio series.

It is incredibly difficult to relate too deeply with the theme of the play when one

has lived a typical middle class life of mom and dad, school, and average health. However the aspects of suffering created on stage were relayed as effectively as possible by stressing the more commonly shared feelings of frustration, protectiveness, helplessness and sheer anguish. By concentrating on the emotions of the characters surrounding Helen, the play was quite successful in stirring the audience and creating an attachment with them. Yet rather than attempt to approach the audience with a subtle but penetrating style, the major social statement was batted at them around every turn. While the latter tactic may have a greater initial impact, its lasting effect will probably dwindle with the graying of time.

The Miracle Worker is a performance well worth seeing but I would be hesitant to jump to my feet on the merits of the play alone, due to the cause if your reason for standing in ovation is partially due to the cause of the disabled, start applauding silently on a regular basis.



"Annie and Helen develop a close acting relationship."

## Woodshed finale

By JOHN KNECHTEL  
Brunswickan Staff

One of the finer traditions at the Woodshed is their last show, done each year by Marc Lulham and Steve Peacock. The pair plays in consummate style, folk, jazz and traditional music; a refreshing offbeat to the pop pairs playing Beatles and Paul Simon (nothing against them, just their large numbers).

Lulham and Peacock combine well as a team, Lulham on a variety of wind instruments (flute, harmonica, and recorder this week, although he plays saxophone, clarinet and others as well.) Nothing like being multi-faceted. and Peacock on three guitars played with intense concentration that pays off in a jackpot.

The two are relaxed on stage and know that the audience will probably like what they are doing, so give a quietly entertaining show. Their jokes are not forced and Lulham has the natural appeal of a true

storyteller both in his songs and between-cut rambles.

The duo's lack of stage fright is apparent all through the show; on one song each one gave slightly different lyrics to the song (they play together only occasionally, now again, attesting to their strong musical and performing talents.) and Lulham, instead of riding the slip over, hoping the audience would forget (as CHSR does with their mistakes), talked about it as an indication of folk music. As songs are handed down from person to person different words and variations develop on the same original tune. Lulham and Peacock capture what they call the "historical" nature of traditional and folk music.

The "titillating tunes" of these two are the most interesting music to come out of the rich background of the Woodshed this year...see them the same time next year - DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL!

## Cycles: Indian art show

In April the Fredericton National Exhibition Centre, corner of Queen and Carleton presents an exhibit of Northwest coast Indian art that focuses on the work of eminent native artist Robert Davidson. *Cycles, the Graphic of Robert Davidson, Haida is*

circulated by the British Columbia Museum of anthropology and will be at the Centre from April 2 until April 27. *Cycles* is a collection of 76 silkscreen images organized in chronological order, tracing the artist's evolution from apprentice to master artist,

enabling the viewer to follow his development. Also, from the Collections of the New Brunswick Museum, the Centre has organized a small selection of beautiful and distinctive Northwest coast artifacts, including small carvings, baskets and weavings.

### Student Work Abroad Programmes 1981

It has often been said that there is no better way to get to know a foreign country than to work there. For the past 7 years The National Union of Students (NUS) and its affiliated service organization The Association of Student Councils (AOSCO) have been successfully operating Student Work Abroad Programmes (SWAP) in foreign lands with a little help from our friends at Employment and Immigration Canada and the governments of participating countries. SWAP provides selected Canadian students between the ages of 18 and 30 the unique opportunity to benefit culturally and educationally through employment experiences overseas.

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