

Marat/Sade outstanding

The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum at Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade.
Studio Theatre
December 2 - 11

review by Grant Littke

Quite simply put, Studio Theatre has staged one of the finest pieces of theatre that I have seen in this city in the past several years.

Marat-Sade is a challenging and intriguing play that Studio Theatre stages stylishly enough to put the lie to the notion that student actors are pale imitations of their professional counterparts. The product is exciting and satisfying, and I recommend it highly.

The play is set in an insane asylum in early nineteenth-century France. The inmates act out the last tormented days of Jean-Paul Marat, a French revolutionary figure stabbed in his bath by Charlotte Corday in 1793.

The eyes of the insane thus interpret history to the audience. The final twist is that the internal play is directed by none other than the man who lent his name to sadism, the Marquis de Sade.

More important than the plot's intricacies is the production's theme - revolution. The lunatics present interpretations of the events and meaning of the French Revolution ranging from the short-sighted and Moody idealism of Marat to the perverse, blunt cynicism of de Sade.

The populace's disillusionment with the revolution's results stems more from unrealistic expectations than from inherent flaws in the revolution's course. The essential hedonism of these expectations is revealed in a wonderful

chorus number, "There is no revolution without general copulation."

The play develops these kinds of themes nicely. Fortunately, it does not provide an easy set of answers. Those answers are left as a responsibility in the minds of each individual in the audience.

The acting for the most part is very good. The performances of Charyl Heikel as Charlotte Corday, Catherine Clark as Rossignol, Marilyn Wallis as Simonne Evrard and David Sivertsen as Jacques Roux particularly stand out. The ability of these actresses/actors to credibly portray insane inmates acting out a serious political and historical drama is a truly remarkable achievement.

My one quibble with the acting is that both Grant Carmichael as the Marquis de Sade and Ernest Harrop as Jean-Paul Marat seem to be reading their lines more than acting them with emotive power. Nonetheless, both portray their characters competently, and they are perhaps meant to be played flatly.

One of the interesting touches is that the actors and actresses never leave the theatre from the time the doors open until the last of the audience files out. We, the audience, enter an asylum for the purposes of viewing a play.

Marat-Sade is not a play for those who cling to the comfortable confines and comforting productions of some of the more mainstream theatres in this city. It is a powerful and disturbing work. It is also consistently interesting, and if one enjoys the challenge of provocative theatre, it is very exciting.

My one hope is that audience response to Marat-Sade will encourage Studio Theatre to continue to stage comparable works.



photo Martin Beales

And you think they're the madmen! - The cast of Marat/Sade pose for a family portrait

Dizzy Gillespie a giant of jazz

by Richard Watts

The word jazz is built on a history of personalities.

And even for those of us who do not make it a habit to listen to jazz music some of those personalities demand we take notice.

The Cab Calloways, the Louis Armstrongs, and the Ella Fitzgeralds don't deserve our attention because they are great jazz players but because they were prime movers of modern music.

Such a player is Dizzy Gillespie.

If you haven't heard his music or are not familiar with the name, you've seen his face. He's the jazz trumpeter with the up-turned bell on his trumpet, and the cheeks that puff out like a hamster's every time he plays.

Dizzy Gillespie is one of the very first players of Be-Bop which by now has become known simply as Bop.

When Be-Bop first began to make its presence felt, the most popular form of jazz was big band swing. With a 4/4 rhythm, Swing was characterized by the entire band playing in harmony punctuated by solo efforts backed by solid simple riffs played by whole sections of the band, noticeably the brass.

But by the early forties names like Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton and Glenn Miller had taken the big band sound so far and performed it so perfectly that any new efforts were bound to end in stagnation.

So it was in the early forties Dizzy Gillespie began to experiment with a different format, which was to become Be-Bop.

Some jazz performers such as Louis Armstrong hated the new innovation and dubbed it a passing fad but time proved them wrong for Be-Bop became the foundation of modern jazz.

Be-Bop begins with three variations on Swing. First the beat was allowed to recede from the solid pulsating beat that the Swing drummers had maintained. Be-Bop drummers were allowed to shine as soloists and innovators in a way that no Swing band could have tolerated.

Second, the rhythm section of the band was allowed to disintegrate, leaving a smaller band in which the players had to be much more aware of their own and each other's timing.

Third, Be-Bop was characterized by a non-continuity in the music which made the music less suitable for dancing but provided the listener with a more intricate, more complex sound.

The result of these three major innovations is anarchy when played by poor performers and Be-Bop when played by the Dizzy Gillespies.

There were other major innovators who began the evolution to Bop, such as Thelonius Monk, Charlie Parker and Bud Powell, but I think Dizzy Gillespie is the most memorable.

He had something that the others had lost as the recording industry made jazz respectable. Dizzy had style. He was the first to wear horn-rimmed glasses, a tiger skin jacket and a black beret and stated the whole beatnik image.

He had that trumpet with the up-turned bell which he swore sounded better and an easy irreverent manner on stage as he cracked jokes and attempted to make his listening audience enjoy the performance as much as he obviously always did.

And Dizzy Gillespie never stopped playing, never entered into self-imposed isolation, or that mock artistic dissipation that so many other jazz musicians fell into as jazz progressed.

Perhaps because he was originally a rebel himself he has always encouraged the other jazz innovators.

Although I've never seen him live I've watched him on the tube, and owned and listened to his records and I am looking forward to seeing him at SUB theatre in January.

For me it is a chance to see history as well as hear a performer who sounds as fresh today as he did forty years ago when his band leader Cab Calloway asked what he meant by playing "this Chinese music in his band."

That Chinese music was the beginning of Be-Bop and the foundation of modern jazz.



"Dizzy" Gillespie

Tickets are available from the SUB Box-Office (2nd Floor, SUB) and various club members.

DINWOODIE

2nd Floor SUB.

BE-BOP



by Jack Vermeé

Filmfans, take heart! There is a good chance that in the future we'll see the formation of a Department of Film Studies at the U of A.

As you may know, there are already some courses in the study of film. Despite being listed in the calendar as "Inter-Disciplinary" courses (a somewhat cryptic title, eh?) enrollment in these classes has been large enough to suggest that an expansion of the program is in order. The long (and possibly unsuccessful) administrative process involved in this expansion is well underway.

On October 25, 1982 the "Report of the Committee for Advice and Information on Film Studies" was finalized. The document proposes that "the existing Film Studies Program be expanded and established as a Department of Film Studies, offering the three types of Bachelor's degrees now bestowed by the Faculty of Arts...." The "Report" has been approved by Arts Council and now awaits the G.F.C. go-ahead. If this occurs and the government provides funding, we may have a Department of Film Studies by as early as September, 1984.

The most important aspects of the "Report" are as follows: (1) a proposed curriculum of over twenty courses heavily emphasizing critical analysis and interpretation of films rather than film production; (2) a proposed timetable for implementation whereby the Department would take three years to achieve full-scale operation (17 full-course equivalents per year); (3) a tentative budget indicating that full-scale operation would cost about \$340,000 per year ("cheap" according to one knowledgeable source).

Jump Cuts

After perusing the "Report" I talked to Bill Beard, film instructor and committee member, about some of the limitations of the proposal.

On the reason for the emphasis on the scholarly and analytical aspects of film as opposed to film-making: "One of the reasons is because the government has said that what they want is for universities to concentrate on the academic aspects of film studies. (The government) wants the film-making part of the discipline to be relegated to technical schools and non-university settings."

On the absence of a graduate program in the proposed Department of Film Studies: "The reason why a graduate program was not proposed was, simply, insufficient access to research materials. If you are a grad student and you want to do a thesis on Antonioni, you need access to all of his films. We just don't have the films. It would be very expensive...life would be very difficult for a graduate student."

So, true cultists will find a way to hang around our university until this Department becomes "actualized". In the meantime, stay tuned to *Jump-Cuts* for further information on the progress of the proposal. (I'll alert you when G.F.C. approves the proposal so you can all send letters to Pete's Palace begging for the funding).

Since this is the last issue until January, it would be an act of folly for me to try and recommend all the good movies coming in the next three weeks. However, I must mention *Chilly Scenes of Winter* at the Cineplex downtown; it's very funny and worthy of your presence. Go to it. Also, the NFT has *Bread and Chocolate*, *Weekend*, *Smash Palace* and the Princess has *The 39 Steps*, *Three Women*, *The Maltese Falcon* and....and....