

Satirizing Alberta

Is Nothing Sacred Anymore?
Theatre Network

review by Lisa Trofymow

In the shadow of the great Coliseum, it's ironic that Theatre Network's *Is Nothing Sacred Anymore?* written by Larry Zacharko, with music and lyrics by Bev Ross, packed the house last Saturday night. This witty musical satirizes Alberta's political dreamers from the Depression's "Bible" Bill Aberhart to the present petro king, Peter Lougheed. If you manage to catch a performance before March 10th, you'll probably enjoy it. ("Wasn't that fun?" I heard someone remark afterwards.)

But if you go to the Network expecting an evening at the *the-ah-tah*, forget it. Network's space is small, but cozy — sitting in the first few rows of chairs gives one the impression of being in someone's living room. Considering that *Is Nothing Sacred Anymore?* is for and about Albertans, the intimacy of the theatre itself reflects that of the play. But since most of the jokes and asides are about Edmonton (the action is set on Jasper Avenue — and in Heaven: what irony), the play restricts itself to appealing to Edmontonians alone. For instance, a visitor from Coaldale would probably miss the references to the "Dome" and the "Downtown Decore". The production itself is fast-paced and exceptionally smooth — no awkward hesitations. The set (a clever adaptation of the Alberta shield) is always busy — although it is an actor's nightmare. It tilts upstage at such an extreme angle that the actors constantly risk breaking their necks as they strut about (a fact which they joke about in the closing song).

The trio of actors, however, needs a bit of polish. As an ensemble it is too separated —

there seems to be no contact between the actors musically or dramatically. This is because each actor lacks consistency in her performance.

Bev Ross is most at home singing and playing at her keyboard. She has a beautiful voice (she is a professional singer/songwriter) but is not a good actor.

Marianne Copithorne is the most accomplished of the ensemble as an actress, shifting between many characters with ease and poise. Overall, she exudes a confident persona and her singing voice is strong and pleasant. Yet, at times, her speaking voice — which is quite nasal — detracts. Her characters are sometimes coy (like the giggling angel), although the other actors can also be as annoyingly cute.

Nola Auguston, while flaunting a boisterous, positive presence, seems harsh in both characterization and voice. She and Copithorne sing and act the most as a duo, yet they do not seem to connect with one another — harming cohesiveness of the trio as a whole.

This was especially apparent in the opening song, a send-up of the western country jamboree, in which Auguston and Copithorne, standing far apart from one another, sing and strum their comic cardboard guitars. They spend far too much time staring at the audience rather than looking at each other. And — most distressing for a musical satire — the three voices singing together are often not in harmony. Each voice as a solo, however, is quite fine.

Even though the ensemble lacks polish, the actors gain points through their obvious confidence and professionalism. Their energy is obvious and infectious and delivers the fun and the spirit of the play into the laps of the audience.



Cast of *Is Nothing Sacred Anymore?*: (from left to right) Nola Auguston, Marianne Copithorne, and Bev Ross



The Album Playlist is based on Airplay — a combination of programmer preference and listeners' requests. Tune in every Sunday at 12:00 for the Alternative Countdown — the favorite albums, EP's singles and tapes.

TOP 10 ALBUMS

1. Various Artists — Rhythm of Resistance (Shanachie/Boot)
2. Jason and the Scorchers — Lost & Found (EMI)
3. BPA (Byproducts of America) — Moving and Storage (Hospital US)
4. The Stranglers — Aural Sculpture (EPIC/CBS)
5. Rebirth Jazz Band — Here to Stay (Arhoolie (US))
6. Muddy York — Scatter the Ashes/Music of Old Ontario (Boot (Canada))
7. Linda Thompson — One Clear Moment (Warner Bros/WEA)
8. Del-Lords — Frontier Days (EMI)
9. The Velvet Underground — Vu (Verve/Polygram)
10. Lloyd Cole & The Commotions — Rattlesnakes (Geffen/WEA)

SINGLES, EPs, & TAPE

1. Simple Minds — Don't You (Forget About Me) (Virgin/Polygram)
2. The Dusty Chaps — Yukon Buddy (Tape)
3. Van Morrison — Tore Down a la Rimbaud/A Sense of Wonder (Mercury/Polygram)
4. Junior Gone Wild — Down & Out (Tape)
5. Dark Room — Test of Time (WEA)
6. This Fear — Soldier of This Fashion (Tape)
7. Deprogrammers — Fear of Success (Crytovision)
8. Funkmeister — War Dance (Ryker/Quality)
9. Clay James — Darlene (Just Fresh)

WHY STOP MAKING SENSE?

"A jewel — a blend of musical and cinematic imagination."
Robert Hilburn, L.A. TIMES

"The best-made American movie of the year."
David Chute, L.A. HERALD EXAMINER

★★★★★
"High-voltage energy . . . David Byrne has the screen presence of a movie star. He's a kinetic spectacle."
Joseph Gelmis, NEWSDAY

"David Byrne is a star of maniacal intensity . . . the Talking Heads get down and burn."
David Ansen, NEWSWEEK

AFILM JONATHAN BY DEMME AND TALKING HEADS

STOP MAKING SENSE

One Week Only! March 9-15
(Sat.-Fri.) 7:00 and 9:15
Parental Guidance

PRINCESS
10337 Whyte Avenue

Contiki '85

Fun and excitement for the 18-35s.

SAMPLE TOURS

1. **MINI EUROPEAN**
from C\$846⁰⁰
21 days - visit 9 countries. France, Monaco, Italy, Austria, West Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Holland, Vatican City.
2. **REEF EXPLORER (Australia)**
from C\$704⁰⁰
14 Days — Tour the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Toconsville, Cairns, Seaworld and much, much more.

For information:

INTRA Edmonton Travel Agency Co. Ltd. 9006-112 Street HUB Mall 433-2494

Independent Travel Retailers Associated

Which glass-roofed mall hosts rotating exhibits from University departments, boasts 50 thoroughly unique boutiques, and feels like summer year round?

HUB MALL
naturally

89 AVENUE & 112 STREET (ON THE U OF A CAMPUS)
PSST! Look for leprechauns on Mar. 15, then turn 'em in to HUB office for great, green prizes!