

ARTS

Baha'i Rocks



NO GLASNOST HERE: Helping out York's Association for Baha'i Studies, Mikhail Gorbachev played the East Bear Pit last Tuesday. Lead singer Doug Cameron (left), best known for his song, "Mona with the Children," appeared at York last year.

Diamond unleashes Ubu on York campus

By LAUREN GILLEN

UBU UNLEASHED
Directed by Tom Diamond
Burton Auditorium

As the seats of Burton Auditorium filled last Monday for the premiere of *Ubu Unleashed*, a peculiar feeling rose in the air. Tension seeped into the theatre like a cold, wet chill. There had been ample publicity, and expectations were high. *Ubu Unleashed* was to be a unique York theatre production.

Filling the stage was a massive yet simple set. A series of huge can-

house and tiny Ubu figurines were perched high above the audience peering down with almost life-like curiosity.

As the house lights began to lower the music rose and two bodies appeared, writhing in a graphic yet ethereal portrayal of the "love making act," from which emerged Alfred Jarry, *Ubu's* raison d'être.

The next few hours were devoted to the portrayal of Jarry's unique yet tragic life. He created the play *Ubu*

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Roi and was the cornerstone of the Absurdist movement. Director Tom Diamond and his cast of fourth-year actors took the challenge and accepted it with surprising success.

The work separated itself into two long acts — pre-Ubu and post-Ubu. Act One shows a shy adolescent Jarry clinging to his half-crazed, dominant mother (Melody Johnson). At school, he quickly learns that he has a cutting wit able to not only entertain classmates, but to fend off the harassment of his professors, especially the loud, egotistical Professor Hebert, or Père Heb (Greg Danakas) as he is called. When approached by schoolmate Henri Morin (Gord Mackenzie) to caricature the much-hated professor, Jarry immediately takes over and embarks on the development of *Ubu Roi*.

Soon, Jarry leaves for Paris to

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ALFRED JARRY emerges in *Ubu Unleashed*

vases, spattered with red paint were suspended high in the lighting grid, touching the floor some 25 feet below. Cloths of a similar style covered rows of seats throughout the

Art: East meets west

By ROY LUNARDI

Desire for Life: Pictures from Berlin brings to mind one thing — the Holocaust. However, this display, which opened last Friday, depicts the hidden feelings of Berlin society. It features silk-screen copies of abstract art from that city.

From WWI through to the Berlin Wall, and the ever-present friction of East versus West, Berlin has been a nucleus of inner turmoil, bringing repression to its art community.

Such feelings can be seen clearly within each work. Anger, frustration, inner torment, and other dissatisfied emotions are masterfully conjured up by the many contrasting lines and colours in the art. Although most of these works tend to be ambiguous in nature, the acute sense of discontent is dramatized in each piece.

The show was put together by West Berlin artist/curator Dr. Wolfgang Max Faust in conjunction with the Goethe Cultural Institute. *Desire for Life: Pictures from Berlin*, as a theme, is perhaps more ambiguous than some of the works themselves, but can be described as the desire for artistic freedom — the need to end uncertainties, and the desire to escape cold realities.

Dr. Faust couldn't attend York's presentation of his work. Catherine Crowston, one of the curators of the show, said, "He (Faust) felt that by taking the show to North America, we could get a comprehensive look at contemporary Berlin art."

Upon initial glance, the exhibit seems to be a typical, abstract modern art show. However, examination of the individual displays portrays the powerful message of each work.

As Crowston pointed out, "All of the work is expressive and violent. The artists are basically concerned with, in its artistic sense, living life to the fullest."

Although conflicts expressed in these works can seem alien to a North American viewer, the intense messages these pieces express can be identified with, regardless of origin.

The show will run until December 18 at the AGYU. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday 12 p.m. to 5 p.m.



ELVIRA BACH'S *Picture from Berlin*

Cruising with York Tones

By SUSAN VANSTONE

Just when you thought it was safe to get out the winter coat and earmuffs, here comes the York Tones Steel Band, the next best thing to a Caribbean cruise.

The York Tones Steel Band is a 12-member ensemble of York students and alumni, which plays pans — instruments made from steel drums. The band is a microcosm of an orchestra, including lead pans carrying melody, guitar and cello pans playing harmony, bass pans, and a trap drum set.

Pans are often referred to as "steel drums." However, lead player Roger Rowe said this term is inaccurate. "It's like calling a violin a piece of wood. The steel drum is what the pan is made from."

Pans originated in Trinidad, and can be used to interpret all types of music. The York group's repertoire ranges from "Pachelbel's Canon," an 18th century classical piece,

through calypso, jazz, reggae, R&B, and recent pop such as Miami Sound Machine's "Conga."

Rowe notes the difficulties in recognition of steel bands.

"Over the years, there's been a problem in terms of perception of the pan as a musical instrument — both players and listeners didn't take it seriously. It was associated with palm trees, limbo, and *The Love Boat*. Gradually, it is being taken seriously as a legitimate musical instrument. This emphasizes what we've always known."

Lately, acts such as Grover Washington, Jr., Andy Narrell, Bobby Nunn, and even Aerosmith have incorporated pans into their music.

York Tones formed in 1976 at Bethune College, moved briefly to Founders, and returned to Bethune at the end of 1986. Practice space is provided by the college council and master David Lumsden.

Lumsden said he is "delighted to give them space. It's nice to have alumni involvement. They play an active role in Bethune and the neighbouring communities. It's an excellent group — they liven things up at the college, and are very popular with Bethuners. Also, Atkinson students who are here in the evening see the band and realize how active and diverse the community is."

The band is interested in adding skin drums, and "African elements from which the music originated," said leader and co-founder Ivor Picou. He added that the band's music "has sincerity in expression and is the kind of ensemble not often seen."

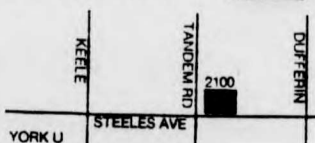
The ensemble includes Rowe and Picou on lead, Gaynelle Lyder, Yvonne Francis, Mike White, and Winston Mattis on guitar, cello, and bass pans, and Garth Neilson on drums. They will perform Friday in the Bethune Junior Common Room from 1 to 2 p.m. Admission is free.

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