

TELEVISION GUIDE and ENTERTAINMENT SUPPLEMENT

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

THE HOLLOW CROWN
by Peter Costwell

Although I have been exposed to live theatre in the past, the opportunity of viewing "The Hollow Crown" afforded me, for the first time, the pleasure of seeing the Royal Shakespeare Company of England in action.

My first impression was one of disappointment for a number of reasons, the most obvious being the apparent lack of an elaborate set. It consisted simply of five chairs and one table, crafted in the Old English style, and three lengths of Royal Red cloth serving as a background.

My second reason for dismay was the total lack of costumes. The actors and actresses casually strolled onstage with a book for each serving as the only prop.

However, before the first five minutes had progressed, these disturbing aspects were cleared up for me when it was explained by a more knowledgeable "patron of the arts", that

this was to be a series of readings and not a play. Well, did I ever feel stupid! After adapting myself to this adjustment in the program, I was able to concentrate more intensely on the acting and subject material.

The subject material, which consisted of letters written by the various Kings and Queens of England, was extremely interesting and tended to propel the listener into the past thoughts and intimate emotions of the English Royalty. As a student of history I found this fascinating because each of the documents, while being historically true seemed to fit in extremely well and provided remarkable continuity.

Secondly, and most important, was the acting by the performers who despite the lack of costume and set, did a fantastic job of portraying the various Royal personalities beginning with William the

Conqueror and ending with Queen Victoria. They acted like the professionals they are but never lacked enthusiasm or, for that matter, poise. One of the troupe specialized not in acting, but singing, and sang some of the more melodious ballads of old England. All in all, they gave an excellent performance which was mirrored in the enthusiastic applause that they received.

I will be looking forward to their next appearance at Dalhousie and hope that their next performance will be a play. That way it's much less confusing!

"If once in awhile people would try something a little different, I believe they'd love it."

LOVE AND REPENTANCE

by Tom Clahane

Love and Repentance by the Royal Shakespeare Company of worldwide fame was well done, perhaps not so well done as their other presentation of the "Hollow Crown", but entertaining none the less.

The production was subtitled as a lighthearted look at love, and contrary to what many people expected, was not a play, whole and contained, but was a series of



readings and song, on the subject of love through the ages. The selection of material ranged over wide grounds, containing everything from the romantic poets of the eighteenth century to the rockers of the twentieth, the Rolling Stones.

I will say here that this is probably my only complaint about the production, and before anyone jumps down my throat I will say that I realize that the reason behind

what happened was to add to a comedy, and I will admit that the way in which the song "Satisfaction" was done was funny, or at least mildly humorous. It irks me greatly to see art destroyed, and misinterpretation, purposeful or not can destroy art and leave a mildly humorous waste behind it.

"Satisfaction" was treated this way, read line for line, with no attempt to express the song in the way it was

meant. Rather, there was a deliberate misinterpretation that seemed to be a snotty looking down attitude at an art form that was not appreciated nor understood by the performers (I hope). I say I hope because if it was understood by the performers they have committed a crime in belittling a work of art.

Aside from the massacre of Jagger and Richards the rest of the performance was top notch. There is a definite ignorance amongst many people both in and out of the university setting when it comes to what they believe they don't enjoy. This is evidenced by the number of empty seats at different presentations put on at the Cohn.

I grieve for everyone who passed up the opportunity to take in the Royal Shakespeare Company, and commend the company on two excellent performances.

