

Frankenstein monstrous

by Donalee Moulton

"Frankenstein - The Man Who Became God" opened Monday night and there were high hopes that Alan Nowlan and Walter Learning had written a play to be remembered. Unfortunately these hopes were squelched by the end of the first act.

Act I opened with a melodramatic scene and it was in this vein that the play ended. In between, however, the scenes and the acting fluctuated between melodrama and realism. In exactly what light the play was intended remains a mystery. Nuala FitzGerald and Larry Aubrey playing Lavenza and Clerval respectively performed their parts superficially detracting greatly from any realism that was present in the play. Bill Cole as Victor Von Frankenstein was even worse. His part often required concentration and emotion both of which he was unable to convey. It is impossible to relate a character in the depths of mental misery when the actor fails in his portrayal of misery. And this was perhaps the only constant feature in the play.

Two actors tried to elevate

themselves above this artificiality but not too successfully. It is difficult to portray depth when the remainder of the cast does not attempt to go beneath the surface. Even so Peter Boretski as Delacey and David Brown as the creature must be given credit. To appreciate the difficulty these two actors had to overcome to succeed a look at the last scene is a prime example.

"The Creature" has just touched hands with his dying maker-Frankenstein. In an outbreak of compassion and gratitude the Creature walks up an elevated ramp until he is about par with the top of the curtain. From a vantage point such as this an actor has the advantage of holding the audience's interest and of delivering a soliloquy with impact. Not this time though. Frankenstein is walking up the steps, his heart is torn with the grief he has felt and that he has inflicted-stagemen are noisily moving props to create a more forceful scene-Frankenstein reaches the top raising his voice as only a man in the deepest of agony can do-the music is playing louder- louder- and

the Creature is raising his voice higher and higher and higher, then THE CLIMAX- the Creature's voice cracks and the remainder of the scene shows Brown in a very high pitched voice fighting to be heard over the music.

At the end of the first act the predominant feeling was that of boredom, by the end of the second it was confusion, and the conclusion brought only mirth. The play was funny in spots, it was even expected to be funny in spots, but more often than not it was humorous where it wasn't meant to be. It lacked cohesion and co-ordination. Props were erratically, sporadically, and obviously moved. A serious detraction. The lighting followed suit. As for sound effects and visual technique it was either nil or ineffective. The theme of the play - the relation of man to his Creator - was

inconsistent. The Creature pleads with Frankenstein to be the first human to willingly hold his hand. Has he forgotten about Delacey the man who fed and clothed him? The man with whom a bond of love was formed and a relationship full of touch? The relation of the Creature pleads with Frankenstein to be the first human to willingly hold his hand. Has he forgotten about Delacey the man who fed and clothed him? The man with whom a bond of love was formed and a relationship full of touch? The relation of the Creature to Frankenstein, symbolically that of man and God, is just as inconcise and conflicting. There is too much ambiguity and where ambiguity is absent contradictions take over. The audience like the play doesn't know where it's headed. In a word Frankenstein was a fiasco.

Excellence ad nauseum

by Mary Pat MacKenzie

The Ladji Camara African Music and Dance Ensemble which performed at the Rebecca Cohn on Saturday night got the standard Halifax standing ovation - it was as undeserved as most of the other standing ovations given at the Cohn. That is not to say the show was a bomb - it really wasn't but it certainly did not come close to deserving a standing ovation but the audience got what it deserved - a long, boring 20 minute dissertation from the group's director, Ladji Camara. He simply did not know when to stop and for awhile it appeared that he would never leave the stage. Many of the audience left before he did!

The dancers, several in particular, were tremendous and put on an excellent show though one would not really call it African in flavour. The dances, songs and music were authentic but the group has been living in the U.S. so long that the costumes and show format are

really more American than African.

As a drummer Ladji Camara is marvelous to listen to and he should undoubtedly stick to drumming, not talking. The fast and often intricate footwork exhibited by the dancers made the evening worthwhile. The second half of the show was better than the first, though one would expect the dancers were exhausted by then.

The show was much too long, even without the post ovation dissertation and if it had been cut in half it would truly have been a success. However, it went on ad nauseum and because it did it is difficult to review it with any degree of objectivity. Suffice it to say parts of the show were terrific but even then not standing ovation terrific. It was colorful and entertaining despite its American flavour but 8:30 - 12:15 is too long to sit for anything, except maybe Olivier in his prime doing Hamlet.

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