

Would you accost a crippled Tosca?

Were all our high hopes for a super-great production of *Tosca* really fulfilled last weekend? No, no, and again no.

Certainly, there were some good things about the presentation: the sets were, for once, better than the defective cardboard masquerading as papier maché which we are usually given; the costumes were suitably sumptuous; the singing of the three principals, as singing, was quite good; Scarpia's entrance and the finale of Act I were as effective as they should have been; and *Tosca* showed some real dramatic feeling in most of her important scenes. What's more, she jumped convincingly from the parapet in the last act.

Depressed by the fact that the orchestral introduction to Act III is bad music, Karp tried to make it interesting by doing a comic "wrong-note" reading of it, but most of the audience was either too polite or not subtle enough to notice.

Furthermore, Angelotti attempted to make his minuscule role meatier by resorting to humorous pantomime in a performance that was different, if not convincing. The sacristan adorned his role with comedy so low as to be subterranean.

As a matter of fact, the only real trouble was that the whole production gave the distinct impression of being a rather middling dress rehearsal instead of a genuine First Night, complete with formal dress and insensate audience (sample bit of dialogue at intermission: "How are you enjoying it" . . . "It's

marvelous,, my dear, simply MAR-velous!").

Most of the blame must be taken by the conductor, Richard Karp, who doggedly and conscientiously kept the orchestra a full bar behind the singers for the most of the opera. (Not that the singers didn't try to rectify the situation. It was a most heart warming experience to see *Tosca* and Cavaradossi go through the whole of their first-act love duet passionately embracing each other and both looking straight at the conductor. But Karp was too clever for them.)

Don't get the impression that I disliked the production. It's just that I am rather disappointed that the Edmonton Opera Association couldn't come up with an effort that surpassed their past offerings, that in fact was markedly worse than their *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*. As I said, the singing wasn't bad, and in the case of Enzo Sordello as Scarpia it was excellent. But the performance needed an awful lot of tightening up.

Some of you may have noticed a review of *Tosca* last Saturday in the *Edmonton Journal*. Not only is it stylistically the best music review ever to have appeared in that bastion of culture, but it contained a few very pointed suggestions as to the future selection of operas to be performed.

The reviewers rightly declare that it is time a few intended laughs entered EOA productions in the form of comic opera. It is true that there is now no avoiding that spineless old warhorse, *Faust*, for the spring performances. But it certainly is not too late for the



—Lyall photo

EITHER YOU'RE LYING ON A VERY LARGE TABLE OR HOW DID THE CANDLESTICKS GET ON THE FLOOR?—asks *Tosca* of Baron Scarpia (Hiss! Hiss!) in this mellowest of dramatic scenes from the EPOA production of Puccini's *TOSCA*. Not so, of course, for one even mellow dramatic bit presents itself when *Tosca* makes the big leap forward and manages to hit the drink instead. Make sense? See the review this page.

EOA to schedule performances of any two of *The Barber of Seville*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, or *Don Pasquale* for next year's line-up.

—Bill Beard

Old bottle, new wine: Jazz Club new scene Jazz Door swings open

Little Boy Blue come blow your horn? If you can't blow, but you dig jazz, come to *The Jazz Door* and get turned on the old way—jazz!

The Jazz Door (previously *The Bunkhouse* and *Club Hawaii*), located below the Roxy Theatre, is an after-hours club for jazz enthusiasts. Opening about 12:30 on Friday and Saturday night and at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday evening for a concert, *The Jazz Door* is well on its way to becoming Edmonton's

first exclusively jazz club. (And note that I said "exclusively jazz club" and not "exclusive club")

The admission price is a dollar fifty a head or, after a five dollar membership fee, a dollar a head for members and guest. There are still about ten twenty-five dollar memberships left for people interested in investing in the club. Then of course, there is no cover charge. Coffee, soft drinks, potato chips and the like are available.

I spent about three hours Friday night (or Saturday morning, to be exact) at *The Jazz Door*. I must say I was impressed by what I heard. I saw a cozy, well-planned room with trappings usual to a jazz club.

I heard "right off the top" jazz and a few rehearsed numbers, but

usually it was improvisational. People would stroll in and sit in for a few sets, then stroll out or listen until they felt like playing again. But the sound only stopped for a change of performers, so the non-musician had a great show.

I found that the club was first conceived and organized by the nucleus of Bob Miller, Bobby Cairnes, Joe Wade, Winston Mayes, George McFetridge, and Jean Sands. (Most of these people were with the *Yardbird Suite* when it first opened.) The idea was to give jazzmen a comfortable place to play and to provide their audiences with regular jazz sessions. The probable reason for the club's success is that the musicians themselves have invested in the club, so they are willing to work to keep the club swinging.

I talked to musicians and fans alike to get some opinions about the jazz scene in Edmonton. Some were pessimistic, but most saw a bright future now that the club seemed to be going strong. The club seems to have garnered support from among Edmonton's best musicians. Tommy Banks, George McFetridge, Graham Taylor, Bobby Cairnes, Bob Miller, Winston Mayes, Stan Adams, and Terry Hawkeye are only a few of the entertainers. And these people are willing to play for nothing more than the satisfaction of playing.

Besides the regular groups, the club is hoping to bring in a few "names from the West Coast, and perhaps some of Winnipeg's artists, for their Sunday concerts. So far they've had people like Tommy Banks and Mark Cohen for Sundays.

—Jill Ferguson

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THE STOCKS BOX

"Spiders under the influence of LSD have been known to weave abstract webs . . ." or FRODO IS GOD!!!

HIPPIES: A WIGGY COLUMN THIS WEEK. See through the put-up, leave your alchemical novels, and the best-truth of the encounter between the invincible secular-saint dream-self, *TARZAN*, and the homosexualizing female impersonator, *MR. TELLY*!!!

Is the *BEST MAN* still the *APE MAN*??? Is *TARZAN* truly a swinger, or is he hung up on some vine??? Has he set out on that uncharted journey into the "rebellious imperatives of the self"??? or is he lost in the heart of darkness, a white man among Negroes??? Can Edgar Rice Burroughs' fascinating archetypal American Dreamer survive his contact with *MR. TELLY*???? Hardly.

We all know what has happened. Just like some poor kid whose hair is too long or whose pants are too tight, *TELLY* has taken *Tarzan* and beaten the hell out of him.

YES, the reborn *TARZAN-OF-THE-TELLY* has apted out (or is it *APE-ed* out?). **BUT**, the *TARZAN* born in 1914 (and raising hell in our *Myth-Structure*) can still compete with weed and LSD—not to mention boooooze—as escape form. The original *TARZAN OF THE APES* still takes us back to Eden and frees us of our clothes, the symbols of inhibition in this repressed society. He can still feast us on the *American Dream* (the *Canadian Dream*): *Steak Of Maximum Violence* (done very very rare), *Smothered In Sauce Of Absolute Innocence*!!!

"I don't know exactly what you're looking for, but follow the pot and you'll find it . . ." or "In that jingle-jangle morning I'll come following you . . ."

TARZAN OF THE SATURDAY-NIGHT TELLY was a simpleton, shouting pious United Statesisms like "Your people have suffered, but they are still free . . ." (Try saying that to the over 200,000 Vietnamese civilians killed since 1965!) *TELLY-TARZAN* hopped around like Bugs Bunny (thus invading the wrong myth), and had the physical appearance of an undernourished groundhog.

Oh where oh when was the victory cry of the Great Ape as it once bellowed forth from the androgenous chest of (The Great) *Johnny Weismuller*???

Saturday Night the *Jungle* had obviously moved to the corner of Hollywood and Vine; and *Tarzan*, as he grovelled on the set floor, reminded me of an over-fat whore suffering either from menopause or morning sickness.

—Bill Stocks