

# Entertainment

## Hardhitting look at life after the bomb

**When the Wind Blows**  
Kaasa Theatre  
til March 2

review by Gilbert Bouchard

"We survived the last one (World War II), and we'll survive this one," says Jim Bloggs, the house-proud and government trusting protagonist in the Phoenix Theatre's latest production *When the Wind Blows*.

So, Jim and his more skeptical wife Hilda, armed with a couple of government pamphlets, turn their living room into an impromptu fallout shelter, and wait for "it all to blow over."

The couple, living in a remote rural corner of England, do survive the initial blast only to slowly waste away with radiation poisoning.

What separates this play from the likes of other nuke dramas like *Testament* and *The Day After* is that this play's protagonists aren't aware of what's happening to them. The victims in the aforementioned television dramas knew they were dying and put on a brave (yet tragic front), and they came across so sanctimoniously it was enough to make you throw up.

But in *When the Wind Blows*, the beauty of the play is that the two protagonists are unaware of what's happening. They so believe the official government line, winnable nuclear battles and all, that they are completely confident that they will be able to sit out World War III just like they did the Battle of London.

Jim and Hilda Bloggs symbolize the most dangerous threat to our survival in a nuclear age: non-nuclear thinking.

Most people, generals and world leaders alike, still think of nuclear weapons as simply big powerful bombs without taking into consideration things like nuclear winter or the long-term effects of fallout.

To put it bluntly, the very people at the helm of most western governments are playing war with nukes that, even if used in a so-called "limited nuclear battle" (we're talk-



Jim (Jack Medley) and Hilda (Jennifer Phipps) Bloggs hiding from nuclear fallout  
Photo Rob Schmidt

Jim and Hilda don't understand why the power's out, why there's no gas, why the water's been cut off, why there's no newspaper or no news on the radio, and finally why their gums bleed, their hair is falling out, and why they have sores all over their bodies.

It's a wonderfully ironic play, but not sarcastic in the least. Raymond Briggs' script (based on his adult comic book of the same name) doesn't condescend, doesn't preach, and shows respect for the two characters he since this is a two character play, they're on artistic director Bob Baker take a quality script and create a quality production.

Much of the success of this production is due to the very sensitive performances by Jack Medley and Jennifer Phipps. They don't have a very enviable task, they have to take the protagonists from a comic book and turn them into rounded and credible characters. Not only that, they are working with a play that relies heavily on irony and symbolism for a lot of its impact, yet they can't allow their characters to descend into the cliché lest they lose their audience. It's a hard row to hoe yet the two of them produce a fine crop of theatrical roses. They're believable and sympathetic from the play's start, and stand up well in a grueling 95 minute long play with no intermission. In other words, creates, and the Phoenix theatre, under stage for the whole thing.

Technically the production was also more than adequate. Stencil Campbell's bright garish set captures the cartoon roots of the script and gives the whole production a surrealist feel to it for the first half, and then magically creates a super-realistic drab and grey post-nuke setting for the play's second half.

Director Bob Baker kept the whole play flowing, not allowing claustrophobia to set in (which easily could have considering the subject matter, the small cast, and the set) and avoiding unnecessary movement and dramatics.

A tight, hard hitting play that takes a much ballyhooed subject and manages to come up with a few fresh wrinkles.

## Orchesis show a potpourri of dance

review by Suzette C. Chan

If the higher-ups at the department of PhysEd saw the product of this year's Orchesis program, they should not doubt the value of the dance group it funds.

Earlier this week, Orchesis director Marsha Padfield expressed uncertainty over the future of the 20-year-old program designed for students who are interested in performing and learning techniques of modern dance. Perhaps the pressure Padfield felt to prove the worthiness of the program turned into beneficial creative energy — this year's Orchesis program was very entertaining.

The show, called Dance Motif '86, featured many ensemble pieces because of the high number of students (about 40) interested in performing (as opposed to "tech-

ing") on stage this year.

"Ikpakhuaq: An Inuit Weather Chant" was easily the most intriguing dance of the evening. Choreographed by Jacqui Ogg with the company, the dancers' talents were well considered, balanced and presented. The performance of the 11 dancers in "Ikpakhuaq" was as strong and expressive as Violet Archer's music for the piece.

Other segments of the show were not always as successful. A narrative set to Jane Siberry's "You Don't Need" failed mainly because there were too many dancers and the narrative angle was a '50s refugee about a girl who feels left out of the romantic world.

Other highlights included "Design Outflow," a beautiful *pas de trois* set to music of Jean Luc Ponty and Bela Bartok and

the beat of cubist abstraction.

"Solofire", another massive ensemble piece featured power-dancing by 12 Orchesis members.

"Psychodelia", set to the soundtrack of the movie *Hair* was a little less fun than anticipated. With all the social comment taken out (the dancers' haircuts were uniformly short, for one thing), all that could be left is nostalgic entertainment and it's hard to be nostalgic about a time that is still so near and an experience that was limited to a very few.

The points are picky, but after witnessing the dancers' pride and eagerness to entertain and the audience's vocal appreciation, it's hard to dispute the value of the Orchesis program. Here's hoping the cheque-signers at the department of PhysEd feel the same.

## Gateway Literary Contest



Short story 3,000 words max  
Short poem 16 lines max  
Long poem 100 lines max

**Rules**

1. Open to all persons attending a post-secondary educational institution in Canada, except the employees of the Students' Union of the University of Alberta and writers who have earned more than two thousand dollars their craft in 1985.
2. All entries must be typed on a single side of good quality bond paper, name, address, and phone number of the author must appear on the back of the entry.
3. All entries must be submitted by noon March 14th, 1986. No late entries will be accepted.
4. Each writer may submit a total of three entries in aggregate.
5. Submission may be in French or English.
6. The winning entries and additional entries selected by the jury will appear in the Gateway Literary Supplement on March 27, 1986. This way shall hold only first North American serial rights to the entries appear in this issue. All other rights will remain with the author.
7. Entries will not be returned.
8. Entries should be submitted to: LITERARY CONTEST, c/o Suzar Drigan, Room 282, Students' Union Building, University of Alberta.

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