

Bruce Mann

# NCCU musical misfires

The North Carolina Central University Dramatic Art Department in cooperation with the Ira Aldridge Players seemed to show that perhaps there's a limit to doing "Your Own Thing."

A potentially charming rock musical, loosely based on Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," "Your Own Thing" received an inconsistent, somewhat entertaining, but flawed performance last week during its three-day run on the Durham campus. Technical problems, weak choreography, a certain lack of polish in singing and acting, and unsuccessful attempts to update the material gave the show a lack of coherence, despite an excellent solo performance by Tamara Dobbins as Viola.

Dancing, jumping, and moving on Linwood Taylor's large, impressive, red, pink and white-striped expressionistic set, the actors enacted the Bard's familiar, mistaken-identity plot in contemporary terms with musical assistance from a quite capable and talented orchestra.

The story opens in the present-day with a shipwreck which separates a pair of identical twins, Viola and Sebastian (John Scott). Viola finds herself in the city of Illyria, which visual projections on the stage set inform us is really New York City or skyscrapered metropolitan life in general. Though depressed by the steel, glass, and urban ivory towers, Viola pretends she's a boy and finds employment with a male discotheque trio, the Apocalypse, who are in need of a tenor.

The Apocalypse manager, Orson, an uptight love-sick man, takes a liking to "Charlie," as he innocently calls Viola, and uses her as a go-between to carry his unrequited love messages to Olivia (Gwendolyn Haskins).

Viola, however, soon falls in love with Orson. And Orson, horrified at his own homosexual tendencies, also grows to love Charlie. Sebastian, who happens to be on 3rd Avenue at the right time and is mistaken for Viola-Charlie, finds love

with Olivia. And when the identities are revealed, everyone's happy, having found his "own thing" in Illyria.

It's all very whimsical, of course, and the contemporary dialogue rarely soars above lines like Viola's "This is getting freaky." But playwright Donald Driver and songwriters Hal Hester and Danny Apolinar have sought to incorporate deeper thought-provoking elements both in the songs and in the play.

For example, two of the 16 songs take lyrics directly from "Twelfth Night." Also, various Shakespearean passages are interspersed among the dialogue to point up the thematic association. And as another example, irreverent visual projections pop up throughout the show to bring comments from Bogart, John Wayne, the Pope, and many others who reflect on the show's theme and poke "telling it like it is" fun at famous personages.

Unfortunately, though, these elements are never properly executed and

integrated in this production. Shakespeare's words merely seem out of place, never given dignity in presentation. And the projections, though visually attractive and handsomely cued, assume no meaning since the sound system muffles the voice-overs, making them impossible to comprehend.

The music, under Joseph Mitchell's direction, fared little better. Only Tamara Dobbins focused her voice comfortably, providing deep, rich tones for "What Do I Know," a stirring plea of love. The other singers seemed off-pitch.

Also weak was Nancy Pinckney's choreography, which combined steps and gestures from the Charleston, the twist, and numerous other stereotyped forms which appeared to be far too dated and almost campy in their performance.

Director William Shawn Smith paced his show at a moderate tempo but never achieved the staccato drive necessary to evoke the contemporary romantic charm which the musical purports to deliver in its main plot. The chief reason was the cast of principals who declaimed their lines rather than acting smoothly, freely as if they were really doing their own thing.

In supporting roles, Barbara Nesbitt as a talkative Nurse and Lincoln Brown as an hilariously convincing Purser scored cameo successes, but the Apocalypse (Fletcher James Allen, Emmanuel Slade, and Brant Mewborn) had only two fine moments — a kazoo song and a Supremes imitation — to distinguish their roles.

On the technical side, "Your Own Thing" had numerous missed light cues though lighting director Glenn Dunn's handling of the discotheque scene was visually skillful, boasting of a green, amoeba-like light show. Costuming, also by Glenn Dunn, was highly colorful, often combining greens and purples to good effect.

In afterthought, it's quite a shame that "Your Own Thing" failed to come off — there are too many honest, poignant musical moments ("Be Gentle," a duet with Orson and Viola is one of them which worked well). Quite assuredly, the musical has dated in time but it still intrinsically has a freely joyous, liberty-evoking spirit which, of course, helped it win the New York Drama Critics' Award in 1968 as best musical of the year.

Unfortunately, this production failed to discover "where it's at" in doing "Your Own Thing."



Ian Anderson, leader of Jethro Tull, pauses during a concert. Jethro Tull will perform November 6 in Carmichael Auditorium.

# Tull, ballet tickets on sale at Union

by Kathy Koch  
Feature Writer

Tickets are now on sale at the Union Information Desk for two upcoming performances by two widely differing groups. The National Ballet of Washington and Jethro Tull will be entertaining audiences in this area in early November.

Jethro Tull tickets are \$2.50 for the November 6 concert. Tickets for the November 5, 6 and 7 performances by the National Ballet in Raleigh are \$1.00.

Jethro Tull, a group that held the number two spot in England's MELODY MARKER poll their first year out, has what Reprise Records call "shock value." This is thanks to leader Ian Anderson, who, in addition to looking like a deranged flamingo in his ragged coattails and pointy toes, has been rated by Playboy as number one flute player.

But Anderson has more than shock to

offer the listener and/or viewer. Besides playing the flute, he does lead vocals and composes most of their material.

Their latest album, "Aqualung" is described as a pro-God anti-church statement. It possesses a satisfying balance of mellow ballads and a bit of militant rock.

Tickets are also available for "Cinderella," a presentation by the National Ballet of Washington, D.C.

The dance troupe, described as one of the finest ballet companies in America, returns to North Carolina after its UNC performance last winter — this time under the auspices of the Friends of the College in Raleigh.

Tickets sales are limited to students only.

Debbie Smith

# Show probes cosmos

"All matter and energy goes down the black holes like water goes down a drain."

John A. Zunes, educational supervisor of the Morehead Planetarium, is explaining the infinite gravitational fields in space during "Curios of the Cosmos" currently being presented at the planetarium.

"Curios" gives the viewer a proper perspective of some of the "headline makers" of astronomy, but not in dry, scientific terms.

In his smooth-flowing monologue,

# Spook Spectacular

For \$ .25 you can get "spooked" any night this week at the Carolina Union's Spook Spectacular. Beginning tonight, six horror films will be shown in a Halloween observance.

Showings will be at 6:30 and 9 p.m. in the Great Hall, and tickets will be on sale on the day of the performances only at the Union Information Desk.

Tonight the "Bride of Frankenstein" features Elsa Lancaster as the mate of the good doctor's monster. On Wednesday night Janet Blair portrays the wife of a university professor who is obsessed with witchcraft in "Burn, Witch, Burn."

Zunes brings these phenomena down to a level both children and adults should find exciting and informative.

One of the most perplexing occurrences, the black hole, is simplified by diagrams that demonstrate, even to the most unscientific, the "drain-like" force that swallows everything around it.

But the show is more than educational. The stars twinkle, explode and fade away. Meteors streak across the sky, the audience zooms by a speeding asteroid, and a "Quasar" television commercial adds a touch of humor.

Thursday, two old favorites of the scary screen, Boris Karloff (famous for "Frankenstein") and Bela Lugosi (the original Count Dracula) star in the classic "The Body Snatchers."

Henry James's short novel "Turn of the Screw" is the basis for Friday's "The Innocents."

A curious combination of stars romp about in "Comedy of Terrors" Saturday night.

On Halloween night brave-hearted souls will be treated to a Danish horror flick, "Day of Wrath."

The special visual effects are produced courtesy of the recently purchased Zeiss Planetarium Instrument.

Zeiss projects the image of a pulsar, while the giant stereo system re-creates the pulsar's most dominant feature — tremendously strong radio waves that sound like 33-speed popcorn popping at 78.

If a part of the conversational-type narrative doesn't exactly hit the viewer's center of interest, and there may be times when it doesn't, he can always just groove on the stary sky above, however cloudy or rainy it may be outside the theatre.

And "Curios" does not have to end when the lights go on. Narrator Zunes is willing to answer any questions left unresolved by the show, and is capable of answering them with analogies relevant to the audience.

"Curios of the Cosmos," second show of the 1971-1972 series, will be followed by the highly acclaimed Christmas show, "Star of Wonder," running from November 30 — January 10. Other programs in the series include "Sky Safari," "The Easter Story," "Stonehenge Et Al," and "The Sagittarius Secret."

Judging from the first two programs presented by the Planetarium this year, the rest should also be of top-notch quality. As sure as the sun rises.

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### Crossword Puzzle

Answer to Yesterday's Puzzle

MITER	ANDES
CANADA	SHIRES
ON TIME	PACA
AND TIMID	SAL
SEAS	EIDER NE
TRILL	REPEATS
LOOK	SOWS
MAYPOLE	TESTS
AD STATE	DARE
DOT	SNOWS
ARAL	NETS DE
MERINO	KEEPER
STEWIS	SPEER

ACROSS: 1 Brick-carrying device, 4 Station, 8 Fuel, 12 Collection of facts, 13 Aroma, 14 Constellation, 15 Death, 17 Dine, 19 Hypothetical force, 20 Lift with lever, 21 Evil, 22 Mature, 23 Hunt for, 25 Article of furniture, 26 Cyprinoid, 27 Sunburn, 28 Equality, 29 Cut of meat, 32 Conjunction, 33 Fruit (pl.), 35 Pronoun, 36 Perplex, 38 Small child, 39 Tiny, 40 Near, 41 Recent, 42 Flaccid, 43 Insane, 45 Seed container, 46 Female (colloq), 47 Printer's measure, 48 Small rug, 49 Informal party, 52 Weary, 54 Ireland, 56 Period of time, 57 Paradise, 58 Inside information (slang), 59 Communist, DOWN: 1 Possessed, 2 Number

3 Wet down, 4 Nosegay, 5 Poem, 6 Conjunction, 7 Walk on, 8 Household pet, 9 Conjunction, 10 Keyed up with interest, 11 Mine vein, 12 Irritate, 18 Paid notice, 21 Chastised, 22 Fruit drink, 23 Pierce, 24 Comfort, 25 Prohibit, 26 Possessive pronoun, 28 Stroke, 29 Posed for portrait, 30 Interjection, 31 Retain, 33 Wager, 34 At present, 37 Mournful, 39 Crafter, 41 Famed, 42 Resinous substance, 43 Apportion, 44 Among, 45 Parent (colloq), 46 Departed, 48 Males, 49 Drink slowly, 50 Exit, 51 Young boy, 53 Note of scale, 55 Artificial language

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**PEANUTS**

NO, BEETHOVEN NEVER HAD A GIRL WHO BUGGED HIM BY BRINGING FLOWERS FOR HIS PIANO!

THAT ISN'T EXACTLY WHAT I ASKED.

**DOONESBURY**

SAY, CALVIN, IF YOU COULD HAVE YOUR CHOICE, WOULD YOU RATHER BE BLACK OR WHITE?

GEE, I'M NOT SURE. I KNOW I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE WHITE... ON THE OTHER HAND, BEING BLACK IS NO BARREL OF LAUGHS.

I SUPPOSE I COULD COMPROMISE: YOU KNOW, BE A PUERTO RICAN OR AN INDIAN... GEE, I DON'T KNOW.

ACTUALLY, MIKE, IT'S A PRETTY STUPID QUESTION.