



Robbie Link, Jane Peppler and Bob Vasile of 'Pratie Heads'

'Praties' sound hard to describe

By MARK DAVIS
Staff Writer

Trying to describe the Pratie Heads to someone who's never seen them before is not the easiest task in the world. Start off by saying how talented they are. Then the other person will invariably ask what type of music they play. This is where the problem occurs. Say traditional music from the British Isles. The other person will then ask what that is, at which point make a few valiant attempts at an answer before finally giving up and telling the person to go hear them play for himself.

Believe it or not, most college students aren't well-versed on the subject of ancient songs from places like Scotland and Ireland. It's something that Jane Peppler, Bob Vasile and Robbie Link, better known as the Pratie Heads, have had to deal with for the better part of six years.

"We've had a lot of UNC students come see us and love us and not be able to explain to their friends what they saw," said Peppler, a lady with a voice pretty enough to make Sheena Easton green with envy. "A lot of the songs

are funny and have jokes in them," Peppler said. "This music is interesting to everybody."

Tonight at the Community Church, the Pratie Heads will be putting on a show to celebrate the release of their second recording, *Todlin' Home*. The show will kick off at 8:30 p.m.

A pratie, an Irish potato, is a perfect name for a band that plays a blend of Irish, Scottish and British music. The backgrounds of the three members encompass everything from jazz to classical to rock. They are the only band in the Triangle that plays contemporary arrangements of traditional songs. Their biggest challenge is taking obscure songs and making them sound fresh and exciting.

"The ballads often have plots more lush, fascinating and genuine than current songwriters come up with," Peppler explained.

There's a fine line between bringing modern interpretations to old songs and being unfaithful to the music; so far the Pratie Heads have managed to do it. By refusing to accept other people's versions as definitive, they've tried to

create something newer based on the inherent beauty in each song. Precisely because of their hatred of both slavish imitation and disrespectful distortion, the Pratie Heads have carved out for themselves a distinctly recognizable sound.

Peppler compares it to an artist's drawing of an apple. "If you tell him to paint an apple, when he's done it'll look like an apple, but it will be something new," she said. "And that's what we're trying to do."

The Pratie Heads' first recording, *Flowers of the Forest*, was lauded in *Spectator* Magazine as one of the ten best traditional works of 1984. The group headlined recently at the Piedmont Folk Heritage Festival and the Southern Maryland Celtic Festival. They have also been asked by the Smithsonian Institute to perform the day before St. Patrick's Day.

Music lovers of all types are encouraged to go see the Pratie Heads tonight. Good cheer and good songs are promised to everyone. And who knows? Maybe someone will even find a way to describe it to their friends.

'That' has growing pains

By JIM GILES
Staff Writer

If teenagers in movies were accurate portrayals of teenagers in real life, there certainly would be no hope for the human race. Why can't somebody make a movie about a normal teenager?

The new teen melodrama, *That Was Then, This is Now*, is about confused youths experiencing growing pains. It contains the obligatory "realistic" street action and dramatic verbal showdowns but fails to elicit any emotional response.

That Was Then, This is Now, directed by Christopher Cain, is the fourth film to be based on a novel by S.E. Hinton, the others being *Tex*, *The Outsiders* and *Rumblefish*. The present film is similar in theme to the others but not as entertaining.

Emilio Estevez portrays Mark Jennings, a troubled young man who has

cinema

lived with his somewhat older friend Bryon Douglas (Craig Sheffer) since his parents shot each other in a domestic quarrel. Mark is constantly agitated about something, and his aggressive nature never fails to get him into trouble. Bryon, however, has begun to grow up since he fell in love with a pretty waitress named Cathy (Kim Delaney). Bryon's desire for a more settled and mature lifestyle results in feelings of jealousy and anger from his childhood friend.

In addition to starring in the film, Estevez also wrote the screenplay. He is a leader of the so-called "Brat Pack," whose members include, among others, the entire cast of *St. Elmo's Fire*. This

up-and-coming crew of actors is talented and attractive and at the same time, running the risk of cloning each other's roles. Estevez's character Mark is nothing more than a one-dimensional punk with a neurotic giggle. The observer does not care about his fate. The lean Matt Dillon has played this type of role before and pulled it off (*The Outsiders*), but the short and stocky Estevez looks too wimpy.

Some of the performances are more than adequate. Barbara Babcock plays Bryon's very tolerant mother, and Morgan Freeman plays a bartender who is the boys' friend. Both are quite convincing. The romance between Bryon and Cathy manages to sustain interest because it doesn't try to be heavy like the rest of the film. Although the movie is not totally worthless, it is a story that everybody has seen before.

'Lady' has lots of character

By ANIKET MAJUMDAR
Staff Writer

Harold Ross of *The New Yorker* once wrote that his magazine did not cater to "the little old lady in Dubuque." Edward Albee's recent original play seems to have derived its title from that mythical character. The Actors Co-op of the ArtSchool, Center for Visual and Performing Arts, is presenting *The Lady from Dubuque* this weekend and next.

Director John Younger, who in the past has directed *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* for the Durham Theater Guild, thinks that this is a "normal" play, unlike Albee's other more surrealistic plays. A play in two acts, *The Lady* revolves around a couple, Jo and Sam, who are joined by two other pairs, Edgar and Lucinda, and Carol and Fred. The lady from Dubuque and her companion Oscar make their presence felt in the second act.

"Each character is one half of an entire personality," said Younger. "The couples have been paired off that way, and whatever happens to one partner affects the other."

"The words and lines themselves are not interesting, but the characters are and that's the challenge," said Sol Gibson III, who plays Oscar.

This is Younger's first directorial collaboration with the Actors Co-op. Approximately seven weeks of hard work have gone into this production. "I concentrated more on developing acting techniques rather than character development; my cast is pretty strong in the latter department."

The Actors Co-op, a community theater affiliate of the ArtSchool, is now in its seventh year. The Co-op produces between two and four full-length plays every year. According to spokesman Steve Clarke, the Co-op plans to stage Mamet's *The Reunion* and Shepard's *The Holy Ghostly* this winter.

Other productions of *The Lady from Dubuque* have had mixed critical reactions. Although the original Broadway production, which opened in January 1980, closed after only 12 performances, Otis Guernsey, Jr. included it among *The Best Plays of 1979-80*, labeling it "distinguished and durable." It has been billed as "savagely funny, a probing, provocative and eloquent examination of death and loss."

Asked what he thought the play was about, Younger said, "It's about the question 'who are you?' and how to resolve it. It brings out Albee's Catholic viewpoint about death. It's quite preachy but the tone is cleverly disguised by making the actors address the audience directly."

Albee treats death as a passage from one existence to another, and acceptance of death brings changes in the survivors. "It changes them for the better," said Younger. Younger, who teaches Greek art in Duke University's department of classical studies, feels that Albee's techniques resemble classical Greek drama. "In many ways Albee is the late twentieth century's O'Neil."

The Lady from Dubuque will be performed by the Actors Co-op Nov. 15, 16 and 21-23 at 8 p.m. at the ArtSchool. Call 929-2896 for ticket information.

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