

# L'HISTOIRE DU SOLDAT" ~ A REVIEW

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acquires new stature and his dancing is graceful and buoyant; his body is more in harmony with both the musical rhythms and his own role.

In part I attribute this to Svea herself, who is beautifully ethereal. Her movements seem to flow out of her own body naturally and flawlessly, as though her body is an instrument of the music. When we see her, she is shrouded in white, like a spectre, and in her dancing she seems weightless and unreal, like the illusion of love and happiness she represents.

The final scenes between Svea and Rick should be the key to the performance. Both the dancing and the music convey a sense of tragedy and loss, not comedy and farce. Comic counterbalance is trampled upon by rampart farce.<sup>7</sup> But not even Svea can remain untouched. The scene in which she screams is

## EDITORIAL ~

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a haphazard fashion.

I can state other examples, but I have already stated my position in print at least twice, and after reiterating them to the Faculty Council I refuse to do so again.

Censorship at NCSA does not take the form of outright deletion of material, although this has been suggested. Censorship here is of a more insidious nature. It takes the form of violent reactions on the part of the performers, and such actions on the part of the directors as to make students fear that they will be denied a role and will incur the wrath of the director who also happens to be their teacher. The implications are clear. A student's career lies in the hands of his teacher who must recommend him or her. The fear of reviewing at NCSA is often justified.

(But I was amused when a student who had reviewed an orchestra performance was intimidated by orchestra members before I had even seen the review. The orchestra committee asked a faculty member to write a review. Ironically he agreed with the student on nearly every point. The orchestra committee has been impossible to please.)

It seems that in order to be a qualified reviewer at this school, our critics demand two things. First, the reviewer must be qualified. Students, they maintain, are not qualified, so they are out. Faculty usually balk at the idea of doing reviews. They are extremely busy with important matters - namely the development of their students. I believe that they should not have to do reviews unless they want to. Who does this leave? No one.

slapstick comedy, and Job Sanders was not content to let Doug the Narrator remain detached. He too is brought in and is allowed to get in a few whacks.

But David Wood should not be credited with all the blame for excessive mess.<sup>8</sup> As a director Job Sanders should have demanded more restraint rather than have encouraged unchecked farce. And the red devil's costume, complete with tail is pure Korn when Dave Wood tries to imitate Burt Lahr in the Wizard of Oz.

To be successful, L'histoire must be reorganized so that there is a balance between the comic and the tragic. Then the audience will be able to leave the performance feeling as though they have seen a work by Stravinsky rather than the Marx's Brothers in a *Night at the Opera*. Didn't you notice? David Wood smoked long cigars and managed to shove one in Rick's mouth.

1 So is this review. It is shameful when something that could be constructive and helpful is used des-

Bravo.

The second requirement, although it has never been openly stated, is that the reviews must not be critical. Some of the reactionary statements made by student reviewers has been prompted by their feelings that the audience politely applauds while they mutter curses under their breath as they leave the performance. Perhaps reviewers would be less violent if they felt they had more freedom of expression. After all, it is only one man's opinion. If a performer or a director thinks that the reviewer's criticism has no merit, then why doesn't he simply disregard them?

A performer must learn to withstand criticism. Should this not be a part of his artistic development?

But no, they maintain, if you are going to criticize, then he should offer "constructive criticism." Frankly I consider this lies outside the realm of the critics function. If he does offer "constructive criticism", then it is optional. Moreover, if the director and performers have not been completely successful, then how can a reviewer hope to reorganize the production?

Learning to endure criticism is part of the game. Antonioni's current film *Azbriskie Point* has been hailed as a complete bomb. He has tried to clarify his position, and he also maintains his composure.

It would seem that this type of composure is sorely lacking at NCSA.

by Anthony Fragola

tructively, perhaps to air personal hang-ups or dislikes.

2 If anything is worth doing, it's worth doing all the way. To be made to laugh before a dramatic point is made is one thing. But if one has just guffawed, the serious point, if it is made strong enough to match the guffaw, is even more pointed, and dramatic. One is forced to keep switching emotions from slapstick, to serious point-making time. Unfortunately, as in this example, people prefer to be spoon fed one bland and unchanging, eye-appealing, sense-numbing time killer. They refuse to let their emotions be changed from one extreme to another, thus, they dislike something that attempts this.

3 Good for you. That's exactly the way I wanted it to come off. The devil wins in the end. What is more, the devil knows he will. Sure, he may lose a few battles, but not the War. Consequently he bides his time, amuses himself at the soldier's expense. The devil is killing time, waiting for the man's soul. While he waits he plays with the soldier as a cat would toy with a mouse. Why be bruesome, and insanely wicked. That's no fun. So the devil enjoys himself.

4 SO HAS ANY OTHER STRAIGHT MAN. IT'S HIS JOB.

5 Lon Chaney, master of horror, once said: "There is nothing funny about a clown in darkness at midnight." It is easy to play evil like Bela Lugosi, but it is much more of a challenge and so much more effective to make evil laughable. It becomes disguised, as it so often is in reality. It is still just as deadly, but now, it's harder to hate, therefore, easier to fall for as the soldier finally did.

6 Any actor, dancer or musician must face this porblem. However, if one's concentration is broken by sounds from the audience, it must not have been very great to begin with.

7 Wouldn't it be nice, if once we were defeated by fate, to be left alone to lick our wounds? Unfortunately, life isn't that way. Fate has a habit of moving from one extreme to another, trampling us mercifully into the earth. Sure we don't like it...it's too real, isn't it.

8 THAT'S RIGHT. NOT EVEN WHEN NEWSPAPER REVIEWERS CAN'T EVEN OFFER CONSTRUCTIVE ADVICE ANYMORE. EVERYTHING MUST BE DESTRUCTIVE. But, what the hell, you can air your own personal dislikes, and let that EXCESSIVE MESS attract more readers. COP OUT.