

Bad brew of sex, drugs, & monsters in Russell's "Gothic"

GOTHIC

Directed by Ken Russell.
Screenplay by Stephen Volk.
Starring Gabriel Byrne, Julian Sands,
Natasha Richardson, Myriam Cyr, and
Timothy Spall.
At the Nickelodeon.

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

DO NOT BE ENTICED BY "Gothic's" trailer; this film is terrible. Normally, a movie's trailer — that montage which a theater plays to advertise one film after you've paid to see another — conveys some sense of what a movie is going to be about. A good trailer gives you a taste of the movie and lets you judge if you will enjoy the full movie or not. Of course, from the producer's point of view, a good trailer is one that convinces you to go to the movie, period.

This is all relevant because when I saw the trailers for "Gothic" a few weeks ago, it seemed like the kind of movie that I would enjoy. The trailer told me that "Gothic" is a historical horror, based on the night that Lord Byron (Gabriel Byrne) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (Julian Sands) spent at Byron's mansion in Switzerland on June 16, 1816. That day, Shelley brought with him his lover and future wife, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin (Natasha Richardson) and Godwin's half sister Claire Clairmont (Myriam Cyr) for a night of free love and chemical recreation.

A terrible storm arose that night and, to entertain themselves, the writers told ghost stories. It is on this night that Godwin was inspired to write her novel *Frankenstein*. The trailer which had attracted me so much is littered with compelling, nightmarish images of occult rituals, violence, mystery, revelation, and lust.

"Gothic" has great trailers.

Sadly, the movie is little more than an empty catalogue of these images: little in the way of plot, dialogue, or intelligence links one visually exciting scene to the next. The movie attempts to sustain a tone



L to R, Natasha Richardson, Timothy Spall, Gabriel Byrne, Julian Sands, and Myriam Cyr in Ken Russell's "Gothic."

of intense horror and fear, but instead evokes feelings of revulsion and boredom.

For example, during the storm the characters assemble in a drawing room for a seance at which they attempt to raise from the dead the creature of their deepest fears. After Shelley becomes quite scared with what they have done, he demands that they hold another seance to banish the creature. Godwin objects, asking what happens if something goes wrong and, instead of killing it, "we create more monsters."

Nobody answers her question; nobody cares. They hold the second seance without her. Visually exciting, little explanation or motivation is given for either of the seances or their effects.

Byrne plays Byron with a dramatic fervor unequaled by the rest of the cast. The viewer never knows if this Byron is truly mad, evil, sinister, and malevolent, or if he simply enjoys terrifying his guests with a

few rounds of "party games." This is not quite the Byron I remember studying, but Byrne plays him convincingly nevertheless. Byrne clearly surpasses his script but in so doing creates the spectre of an empty, pathetic ghoul which is upsetting to a Byron fan.

Byrne's performance serves to further undermine the flatness of the remaining actors. The thought that this Shelley could have written "Ozymandias" is ludicrous: the two or three times that he does break from dialogue to verse, his words are poorly written and inappropriate.

The other actors are no better. Except for two or three key lines (which, incidentally, are repeated in the trailer), Godwin is filled with such reserve that she seems almost a corpse. Her reserve is explained as resulting from the recent stillbirth of her child, but Richardson performs the role unconvincingly.

Myriam Cyr's wild and untamed hair is

visually captivating, but her only line of any consequence ("He is the devil! Show them your cloven hoof!") is out of place, out of character, and, again, voiced over in the trailer. Byron's biographer and personal physician, Dr. John Polidori (Timothy Spall), is just plain pathetic, both in character and in performance.

The only redeeming feature of this film is the photography: the elegance of Byron's mansion; the monsters of the opium dreams; a woman's body suspended from a tree; the tiny entrapping room of doors, all locked; the body with its skin surgically removed; leeches; Myriam Cyr, naked and covered with mud, a rat in her mouth; enchanted suits of armor; trees ablaze, struck by lightning; Shelley naked, standing on the roof under the storm.

But do not waste money seeing the movie: you'll catch nearly all the good images in the trailers.

OLDIES BUT GOODIES

People tell us their favorite classic products

Although literally thousands of new products — amid much fanfare — are introduced to the market annually, the vast majority quickly disappear. At the same time, some products which have been around for years continue to sell well because of word-of-mouth rather than formal advertising. I've asked various acquaintances for their favorite obscure-but-good products and here provide a list of the best.

Graniteware, made since the Civil War, is a white-speckled black enameled cookware, advertised as "America's first non-stick cookware," and was probably used by your great-grandmother, if she lived in the States. It withstands much more abuse than does Silverstone, it doesn't react with foods as do aluminum and stainless, it heats evenly, and most importantly it's cheap. I have a \$2.99 saucepan that I've used at least three nights a week for five years and it looks as good as new. Most food just washes right off,

and really burned-on stuff can be removed with Bon Ami (never use anything harsher on enamelware!). Graniteware is available in numerous forms, including roaster pans, double boilers, pots ranging from the butter-melting size to those large enough to cook lobsters for the entire summer population of Ogunquit, and best of all the quintessential "everything pot" which has various strainer and steamer inserts and can be used for an amazing range of cooking tasks. Available at discount and hardware stores.

Goof-Off, an amazing and secret combination of solvents blended in Georgia and not understood by organic chemists, has the remarkable ability to remove new things from old things. It will equally well remove rubber bumper scuffs from your car's paint, or auto paint from your rubber bumper strips. It will take graffiti off painted walls; indeed, it will even remove a new coat of paint from old paint of exactly the same type. With a little manual assistance it does a fair job on such "impossible" things as MIT parking stickers, bubble gum, and

spilled latex paint. Said to be easily available in local hardware and discount stores, but the only place I've recently seen it in stock is Dawson's Hardware on Huron Avenue in Cambridge.

Number Six, George Washington's favorite, is reputed to have been the first men's Eau de Cologne blended on this side of the Atlantic (one wonders what happened to numbers one through five!), and has been made by Caswell-Massey using the same formula since before the American Revolution. George sent a few bottles to the Marquis de Lafayette as a gift, and both Presidents Adams were later fans. Nowadays this classic scent is available in after-shave, soap, and talc forms as well. Always available at Caswell-Massey's local store in Copley Place; often available in pharmacies with good fragrance departments, as well.

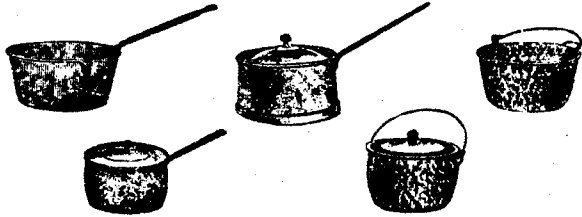
Bag Balm was originally formulated for chapped cows, but Vermont farmers — being practical folks — found it to be the best thing for chapped hands, too. Cows now see only a small por-

tion of the Bag Balm factory's output. Available at veterinary supply stores and rural pharmacies throughout Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

Dickies chinos have a classic baggy cut, nice wide belt loops, and indestructible pockets and zippers. They last nearly forever. They come in a wide range of colors and cost about half as much as chinos from the Lands' End or L. L. Bean catalogues (Dickies are rumored to be made out of identical material at the same factory as the latter's). The seat and waistband are doubly-sewn so that they can quickly be let out about an inch should your posterior dimensions increase before the slacks wear out. Available (and often on sale) at discount stores like Bradlees, AnnHöHope, Zayre, et al.

Moxie, the age-old, bitter, gentian-root-extract soft drink, is unquestionably an acquired taste. But what can you expect from a drink with a picture of a pharmacist on its label? The formulation is virtually unchanged since the days when the government still permitted advertising Moxie as a "brain food." (Actually, a number of years ago the manufacturer experimented with a slightly lighter, sweeter flavor but was besieged by angry protests from die-hard Moxie fans who said they actually enjoyed the characteristic acrid taste — so take that, Coca-Cola!). Rum-and-Moxie-on-the-rocks, appealing to those who also like mixed drinks containing lots of Angostura bitters, is a (admittedly minor) craze which resurfaces every few years. Available at most supermarkets.

— V. Michael Bove



FLY TO THE BIG APPLE...

Some prefer the friendly skies

New York City. For many at MIT, it or one of its suburbs is home. For others, it can be an exciting long weekend away from small-town Boston. The question that arises for both groups is, quite naturally, "How do I get between here and there?"

This native New Yorker has spent the past five years dealing with that question on a regular basis, and for the other 18 years of his life on an irregular basis. (My father's family is from Massachusetts.)

Air travel is a frequent, and often surprisingly affordable, answer to that question. It leads, though, to the next question: What airport should I fly into?

Kennedy airport is a bad choice. It is served only by large, expensive carriers. Taxis from the airport to mid-Manhattan cost under \$25. The "Train to the Plane" express takes 50 minutes on average; the regular subway take an hour and a half. Shuttle buses are probably the best bet if it is not rush hour.

LaGuardia is the best choice for people traveling to Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan's East Side, Long Island (Suffolk County residents might consider flights to MacArthur airport), West-

chester County and Connecticut (these residents might consider White Plains airport, also.) Taxis cost under \$20 to mid-Manhattan. The subway-bus combination takes about an hour, but costs only \$2. Shuttle buses to Grand Central Station at 42nd Street and Park Avenue cost \$6.

Newark is a little-known jewel of an airport. In addition to being the airport for northern New Jersey, it most ably serves Manhattan's West Side. New Jersey Transit buses take 30-40 minutes to bring one to the Port Authority Bus Terminal on 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue. No one takes a taxi from Newark.

The most important question is, of course, what airline to fly. The schedules and fares change rapidly, so call for the latest information. I have only listed airlines with which I have personal experience, but they have proved, over time, the best deals available.

Eastern (262-3700) still has its famed shuttle service to LaGuardia every hour on the hour. Since deregulation and the air traffic controllers' strike, Eastern's policy of guaranteed seating has fallen into disrepair. The planes are cramped, but no reservations are required — or accepted — and you will eventually get where you want to go. Last Thanksgiving, Eastern was running second and third sections of its hourly flight, while the wait for a seat was about two hours.

The basic fare is \$65, but goes down to \$50 from Saturdays at 8am to Sundays at 2pm. If you're between the ages of 12 and 21, you qualify for a \$35 youth fare weekdays from 10am to 2pm and 7pm to 9pm, and from Saturdays at 8am to Sundays at 2pm.

New York Air (569-8400) is more comfortable than Eastern, with wider seats and free munchies. The price you pay is the necessity of making reservations. Flights depart every hour on the hour to LaGuardia with a basic fare of \$65. Weekend fare is \$50. Students with valid ID can fly for \$35, and New York Air has a \$66 round-trip fare. Restrictions on the latter two apply, so check when you make your reservations.

People Express (523-0820) represents the second worst airline experience I've had. (The worst was with the Yugoslavian airline, but since it doesn't fly Boston to New York, we need not get into it.) People is usually late, crowded and inconsiderate. One time after loading us into a hot plane and keeping us sitting on the ground for over an hour, the stewards brought the drink cart around, but had the nerve

...OR TAKE THE TRAIN

Some prefer to go-by rail

Call me old-fashioned, but I would much rather take the train from Boston to New York than fly. Over the past two years, I've traveled between Boston and New York about twenty times. Of the twenty, I've flown six times. Each time, I resolve that I will never fly again.

For the Boston-New York trip, Amtrak beats all of the airlines hands down. Amtrak costs less and has a nicer ride. The time spent on the train is more useful than the time spent on the airplane and bus. Unless you have a car parked at La Guardia airport, or friends who can pick you up, there's really no reason to put up with the hassle of flying.

The trip from South Station, Boston, to Pennsylvania Station, New York, takes from four-and-a-half to five hours. While this time doesn't compare favorably to the one-hour flying time between the cities, the door-to-door times are much closer.

To travel by train from MIT to Columbia University usually takes around five hours and twenty minutes, including the ten minute subway ride from MIT to South Station, four hours and forty-five minutes by Amtrak to New York, and twenty-five minutes from Penn Station to Columbia, again by subway. One of the nice things about taking the train is that you can get to South Station a minute before the train leaves and still make your train.

The airplane alternative takes a little less time, but the time spent enroute can't be spent productively. From MIT to the airport takes about thirty minutes on a good day, twice that during rush hour, whether you take a taxi or the subway. Airlines recommend that you arrive at the airport half an hour before the flight leaves. Most people allow an hour between leaving MIT and their flight's departure time.

Arriving New York airport (any New York airport), the traveler is faced with the problem of getting to The City. The usual way to do this is by bus, the usual cost is \$10, and the usual time is an hour. The bus stops at Grand Central Station, which is forty-

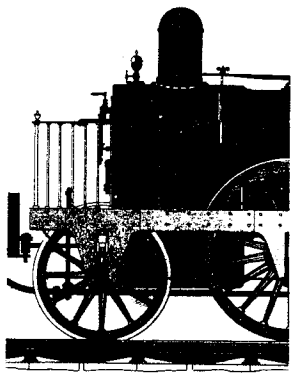
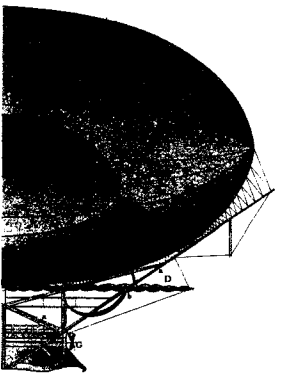
five minutes by subway from Columbia.

For the entire trip by airplane, you get a desk for about 40 minutes, versus the entire four and a half hours of the train trip. Few people can get work done during the subway and bus rides or while waiting around at the airport. Being a hard-working MIT student, I'm concerned about such things.

Besides a savings of time, there are other advantages to Amtrak:

- The view from the train of New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts far surpasses the view of clouds you see from the airplane. Be sure to sit on the side of the train facing the ocean (on your left leaving Boston, right leaving New York, if geography isn't your strong suit).
- Train food is better than airplane food. There is more variety and the snack car is almost always open. Trains also have a wider selection of drinks.
- Two 110V outlets are provided in every car, in case you need to work on your 6.004 lab kit or Macintosh computer.
- The trains leave and arrive Boston round-the-clock, while flights out after 9 pm are hard to come by.
- Trains stay to their schedules much more than airplanes do. Once I flew to New York and the airplane was over three hours late! (The airplane had sat on the ground at Logan for two hours.) These sorts of delays, rare on the railroads, are common in the "friendly skies", especially at fog-plagued airports like Logan.
- The train stations are right in the middle of Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington. In each of these

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VINTAGE VINYL

Fourteen of the best revisited

In the spring of 1981, I happened to be present at a late-night flame session in which a group of Senior House residents attempted to formulate a list of rock records they felt every well-stocked collection ought to contain. Recently, while rummaging through my desk, I ran across a piece of paper on which I had noted the discs on which there had appeared to be some consensus. This is in no way a list of best-ever records, nor does it even comprehensively cover good or influential music (the absence of The White Album, Quadrophenia, Electric Ladyland, Workingman's Dead, Dark Side of the Moon, and Thick as a Brick strikes me, and at the same time I seriously doubt that every collection needs Virgin Fugs), but in the past week I've given them all a listen to see which ones have become dated and which are true classics. No warranties, expressed or implied, are provided...

The B-52's, The B-52's. Quirky, mindless dance music that was sufficiently ubiquitous five years ago to be almost forgotten now. No party tape is complete without the entire A-side of this record on it, though, including "Planet Claire," "52 Girls," and "Rock Lobster." Spray-paint a big red X on the B side so you won't accidentally put it facing up on your turntable and have to listen to an eminently unmusical version of Petula Clark's hit "Downtown."

The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars, David Bowie. Bowie as the spacy, red-haired bisexual Ziggy Stardust belts out the all-time-great-Saturday-night-speaker-melter "Suffragette City" and sings about suicide ("Rock and Roll Suicide"), the end of the world ("Five Years"), and interstellar visitors ("Starman") as only a spacy, red-haired bisexual can.

The Kick Inside, Kate Bush. A bit dated, this one, as pianist/vocalist/dancer Kate Bush has long since made the transition from pop music to Art. Those familiar with only her current records may be a bit surprised to hear the mindless-yet-mysterious "The Man with the Child in His Eyes" and literate-but-unmistakably-popish "Wuthering Heights."

Young, Loud and Snotty, The Dead Boys. I seem to recall there being some dispute as to whether this or *Never Mind the Bollocks* was the better representative of the late-70's punk genre. Stiv Bators does such a wonderful angry-young-punk act on the classics "Sonic Reducer" and "All This and More" that it's a shame to hear the garbage he's recording nowadays with the Lords of the New Church.

Q: Are We Not Men? A: We Are Devo! Devo. High-tech Dadaism rears its ugly-but-silly head. Like their Dada predecessors of half a century earlier, these guys did most of their best work before anyone noticed them. Good party tunes like "Mongoloid," "Uncontrollable Urge," and a version of "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" that Mick Jagger once claimed to prefer to the original.

The Doors, The Doors. Eleven-and-a-half intense minutes of "The End" — the most celebrated Oedipus complex on vinyl — set off against slightly-dark-but-fun Jim Morrison pop like "Twentieth Century Fox" and "Soul Kitchen."

Ambient 1: Music for Airports, Brian Eno. In retrospect, I think that the Eno album that should have been on this list is *Here Come the Warm Jets*, in which he orchestrates lyrically-off-kilter quasi-, para- and meta-pop tunes like "Blank Frank," "Dead Finks Don't Talk," and "Baby's on Fire" (the latter containing the best guitar solo Robert Fripp will ever play) as no one else has ever had the nerve. Airports, on the other hand, is a protest against the insipidness of Muzak — thoughtful, intellectual background music running the gamut from processed-piano-with-litling-vocals to Baroque organ.

Virgin Fugs, The Fugs. You probably don't want this album, because of both the live-in-a-basement production quality and the rude lyrics, but it's historically interesting. Just as the dark side of the Victorian era found

expression in Aubrey Beardsley's art, the early-60's folk renaissance that brought us The Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul and Mary was also responsible for the birth of The Fugs, a band nowadays remembered mostly for advocating strange uses for products like Coca-Cola and Saran Wrap. But besides singing about sex ("My Bed is Getting Crowded"), drugs ("New Amphetamine Shriek"), and Satanism ("I Command the House of the Devil") in far more graphic terms than any heavy-metal band of today, The Fugs had some redeeming social qualities — despite their concerted effort to the contrary. "CIA Man" ("Who can train guerrillas by the dozen? Send them out to kill their untrained cousin?") sounds frighteningly current twenty-one years after its recording. The album closes with Allen Ginsburg's "Howl," the quintessential Beat poem, set to music — a cut that must set some kind of record for having the most lyrics per unit time.

Figure 14, Human Sexual Response. Local band and Student Center favorite with unfortunate name makes it big. Actually, there's not very much sex on this record, except for the cut "What Does Sex Mean to Me?" At the same time, there is a primo, danceable remake of the Capitols' "Cool Jerk" and slightly-weird-but-inspired songs like "I Want to be Jackie Onassis." By the way, in polite company one refers to this band as "The Humans".

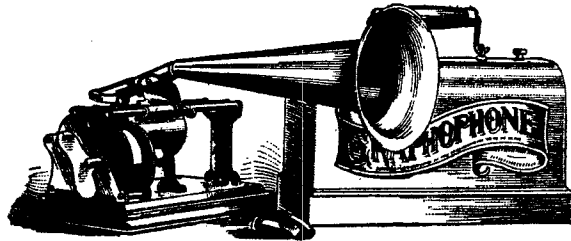
psychedelia "Somebody to Love," "Plastic Fantastic Lover," and — most of all — "White Rabbit."

In the Court of the Crimson King, King Crimson. King Crimson, Mark I. The unforgettable screaming-through-a-fuzz-pedal vocals of "Twenty-First Century Schizoid Man" immediately followed by pastoral Mellotron-driven musings like "I Talk to the Wind." Indeed, a fairly schizoid album, perhaps best listened to in small pieces.

Fresh Aire, Mannheim Steamroller. What happens when a bunch of classical musicians get together and play rock-and-roll? Sometimes, unfortunately, they end up doing a Booker T. and the MG's imitation, as the Steamroller here does on "Hot Chocolate." But it's still a good (and groundbreaking) album even if it's since been improved upon by Fresh Aire III.

Easter, Patti Smith. Advanced rock with a definite 60's influence. With "Space Monkey," "Ghost Dance," and "Because the Night," side one of this record gets my vote as the best album side of the 70's.

The Velvet Underground and Nico, The Velvet Underground. Produced by Andy Warhol, this album teamed up the Velvets with European film actress Nico. Art rock was not yet in vogue in the late 60's; Warhol's involvement combined with the matter-of-fact song "Heroin" assured that even the most progressive radio programmers would ignore this disc — admittedly a shame



Surrealistic Pillow, Jefferson Airplane. "If you're going to own only one 60's album, own this one," was one person's comment. The Airplane's first recording with Grace Slick, *Surrealistic Pillow* was the definitive make-love-not-war album. Contains the classic

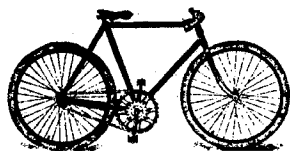
since they were also ignoring the should-have-been-classic rockers "I'm Waiting for the Man" and "There She Goes Again." You get extra points for having an original copy with the peel-off banana sticker on the cover.

— V. Michael Bove

CYCLING TIPS

Now that it's biking weather again. . .

- Massachusetts state law requires bicycle riders to use headlights after sunset in order to be visible to motorists. If you're not riding in traffic, a headlight will still help you avoid the potholes for which this region is famous. A large, bright battery-powered light is the best. Generator light sets are not a good idea because they chew up sidewalls if they're not adjusted properly, have little wires that get inextricably tangled up in everything, and go out when you're stopped at an intersection. Armband lights and strobes make a rider very visible to motorists, but make it difficult for them to judge distance (and besides, don't illuminate the roadway). Even if you have a very bright headlight and lots of reflectors, you should still wear light-colored — or even better, reflective — clothing and a helmet for night riding.
- Ride on the right side of the road, with traffic. Respect signs, signals, and one-way streets.
- Lock your bike up with a Citadel, Kryptonite, or similar solid-bodied



lock (expensive but worth it), and if at all possible don't leave a bike outside overnight. Remove tire pumps and other easily-detachable accessories, and take them with you.

- Registering your bike with the Campus Police increases the chance of recovery if it's stolen. The sticker costs only 25¢; be sure to bring your serial number to the CP office.
- Bikes are not permitted on MBTA buses, trolleys, or subways. Commuter trains allow bikes only if they fold or otherwise break down (if you have quick-release wheels, you can sometimes get away with removing them and bundling them together with the frame); Amtrak and long-distance buses require bikes to be boxed. Most harbor ferry lines will carry bikes for a small extra charge or for free.
- Boston's Bikemap (\$2.95 at most bookstores and bike shops), a topographic bicycling map of Boston and vicinity with preferred routes marked, is a wise investment.

— V. Michael Bove

TEA, CONTINUED

teas are fermented before they are dried. This modifies the tannic acids and makes the dried tea black or brown. Green teas are unfermented and more acid, while the oolong teas are only semi-fermented. The black teas are the most popular in America. Within the black tea family, the flavors vary substantially. Some teas such as Lapsang Souchong are smoked and have a tarry flavor, while others like Keemun are mellower. This article will not even attempt to describe the full range of flavors. Most tea shops will sell small containers or samplers of teas, and this is the best way to find new favorites. Green teas are astringent and unusual to most Americans. Green teas or oo-

longs are the primary component in Chinese restaurant tea and should be drunk without sugar.

Darjeeling, Keemun or Assam are good teas for the beginner. They have distinctive, but not bizarre, flavors. Keemun is the classic Russian-style tea, while Darjeeling and Assam are more English in flavor.

Tea bags are not inherently bad, but one must be careful as inferior teas are often used in them. A word of warning: there is no tea variety named Pekoe or Orange Pekoe. These are leaf-size designations, and are a good sign the tea is a mixture of lower-quality teas. One can find good teas in bags from Twinings, Bigelow and others. A good tea guide is *The Book of Coffee & Tea* by Joel David and Karl Schapira (New York: Saint Martin's Press). It describes in detail which countries produce the best varieties of tea, and even which plantations or regions are best.

What are you waiting for?

Good tea is not difficult to make. With care, even the smallest dorm room or office cubicle can have tasty tea. All it takes is heat, water and tea, and a willingness to experiment with new flavors.

— Ken Meltzner

TRAINS, CONTINUED

cities, it is much easier and cheaper to get to the train stations than to the airports.

• Finally, the best reason to take the train: the cost.

The holiday rate from Boston to New York is \$39 one way. This rate applies only to the weekends before and after major holidays.

The normal Monday to Friday fare is \$29 one way. The weekend fare is \$25. There are no round-trip specials between Boston and New York.

PLANES, CONTINUED

to still charge the passengers 50 cents for a soda.

People fly hourly to Newark from 6:40am to 10:40pm. It charges \$59 before 7pm and \$39 after and on weekends. Reservations are accepted, but I have never failed to get a seat when flying stand-by.

Piedmont (523-1100) is a joy to fly. Its employees at all levels are the nicest and most friendly I've encountered in my travels, a major reason that it has my frequent flyer account.

Piedmont flies to Newark at 7am, 10:40am, 3:05pm, 6:05pm and 8pm. The student fare is \$35, but not all the employees are aware of it. Ask for it when making your reservation and double check the price when you get your ticket. Other fares run from \$58 round-trip to \$73 one way; call for restrictions. There is a \$2.50 fuel surcharge out of Boston.

The Other Major Carriers are all expensive and fly infrequently from Boston. TWA (367-2800), for example, flies in the morning and early afternoon to Kennedy, and in the early morning, late afternoon and evening to Boston. The basic fare is \$129, but there is a \$64 weekend fare and a \$49 fare with restrictions attached. If you have a frequent flyer account with a major carrier, however, it is worth checking to see whether the higher prices and restrictive schedules are worth the side benefits.

— Robert E. Malchman

in the company not only of Anne's reluctant beau Tom, but her brother Reg and

"4 Short Works" reveals strengths of the Mobius Performing Group

4 SHORT WORKS:

"Letters from Japan," by Victor Young.

"Lot's Wife," by Mario Paoli, performed by Yvette Torell.

"The Misuse of Tools," by Dan Lang.

"Dreams (breathe/don't breathe) of Home," by Marilyn Arsem.

Presented by the Mobius performing group. May 8, 9, 15, 16 at 8 p.m.

Tickets \$6. Telephone: 542-7416.

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

"I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU!" chants Marilyn Arsem to a wide-eyed, grinning fish, swimming through the air. "Feet!" We laughed so hard there were tears in our eyes.

For those uninitiated to the marvels of performance art, for those that think that Mobius is a one-sided band rather than a performance space on Congress Street, or for those merely interested in a totally new experience, I recommend wholeheartedly the Mobius Performing Group's current feature, "4 Short Works." For the frequent patron, the evening is a *tour de force* of Mobius' style and diversity.

"4 Short Works" is exactly that, four separate performances, each with a style and character all its own. The pieces are so dissimilar that they resist grouping together. Still, the presentation does not detract from the power or the impact of the individual works.

Last Friday's performance opened with "Letters from Japan," in which Victor Young reads four letters he wrote to his relatives while he spent 16 months in Japan. The letters each explore a different aspect of Young himself, Japanese culture, and modern day America. In between

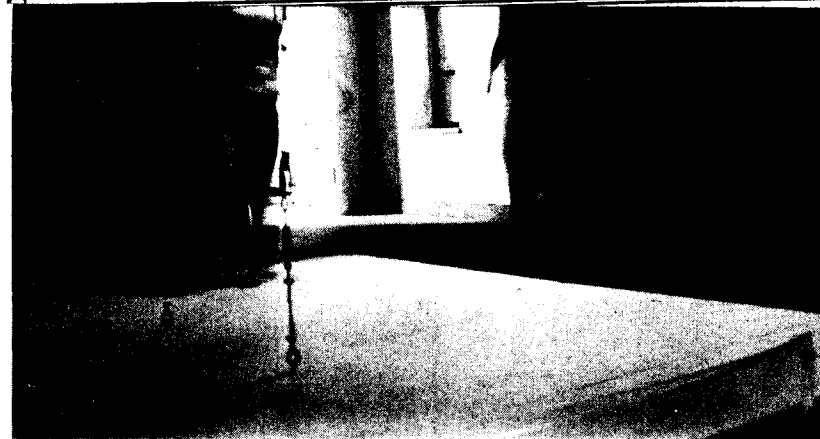
and when the gathering collapses in pieces

reading the letters, Young constructs a traditional Japanese flower arrangement.

Young's letters paint a hauntingly realistic tapestry of modern day urban Japan — from Tokyo to Hiroshima — punctuated by statements of his dissatisfaction with America and himself. "I bring the Wild West to the Far East, but I fear that all my snakes may be inside me," he reads, as he pursues several themes and stories. But his picture of America lacks the depth and understanding shown in the Japanese counterpart. The juxtaposition of the two is upsetting, perhaps intentionally so.

"Lot's Wife" begins with promise, but the 17 minute performance seemed to drag after ten. The performance is a semi-static "painting" or "landscape play," visually powerful but lacking in deeper substance. In the center of the stage is fish-bowl with a live goldfish in it, actively swimming around. ("Art is his life," Paoli shared after the show.) The goldfish's name is Lot. To the right of Lot is a hanging venetian blind, Yvette Torell sitting behind it, facing away from the audience and into a television camera. To the left of Lot is a video monitor, with Torell's haunting image staring straight into the eyes of the viewer. As the piece progresses through five stages — each three minutes long — weird music plays, the lighting changes, and Torell alternately sips milk and speaks in intentionally unintelligible words.

The problem with "Lot's Wife" is that it does not go anywhere, it does not say anything obvious, and I am at a loss to venture what the piece "means." The piece is a startling visual statement but no interpretation is apparent or suggested. I enjoyed the opening, but I usually do not spend 17 minutes looking at a single paint-



Alice P. Lei/The Tech

Members of the Laura Knott Dance Company performing "Aqua Echo," a performance art/dance piece created by Shawn Brixey and Laura Knott, graduate students of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies. Shows were held last Wednesday and Thursday nights, and incorporated the elements of Water and Sky.

ing.

"Dream (breathe/don't breathe) of Home" is a bizarre, well-crafted, integrated collection of images and sequences portraying dreams and visions of Marilyn Arsem. The set is eerie; a toaster oven baking bread, a table set with a glass of hair, a man sitting, perhaps asleep, and bones, bones, bones everywhere. Bones are hung in a curtain, bones cover the chairs, and bones fill up a child's crib. Arsem enters, wearing layers upon layers of clothing, chanting quietly to a fish she carries about with her.

The piece is strong, hilariously funny, captivating, and intense. But at some level it fails in the same way as "Lot's Wife," in that it defies interpretation or analysis. Unlike "Lot's Wife," however, the material presented in "Dream" is sufficiently varied that it rivets the audience's attention from start to end.

"The Misuse of Tools" opens with Dan Lang boldly proclaiming "I have been robbed. I have been robbed of Meaning. The reason is because I have misused my

tools." What follows is a monologue in which Lang tells of things he has done, the tools he has used, and how he has misused some of them. Lang shows some tools that have been misused, and then breaks to a discussion of theater and performance art in general.

This piece is light and funny but also deeply disturbing. Things do not seem to work any more, on stage or off. Lang tries to show a movie to illustrate his point, but the movie projector does not work. He presents his fears, his philosophy and his pain before a group of critics, but they are unmoved. He tries to show a videotape, but the videotape player does not work either: it too has been misused. The performance forces us to think about things that we too have misused. At the end of the performance, I found myself thinking back to the things that I had misused: time, space, money, friends. Lang's pained stoicism cut through like an icepick.

"4 Short Works" is a terrific sampler of what Mobius has to offer the Boston community. Be sure not to miss it.

A refreshing look at the limitations of scientific understanding

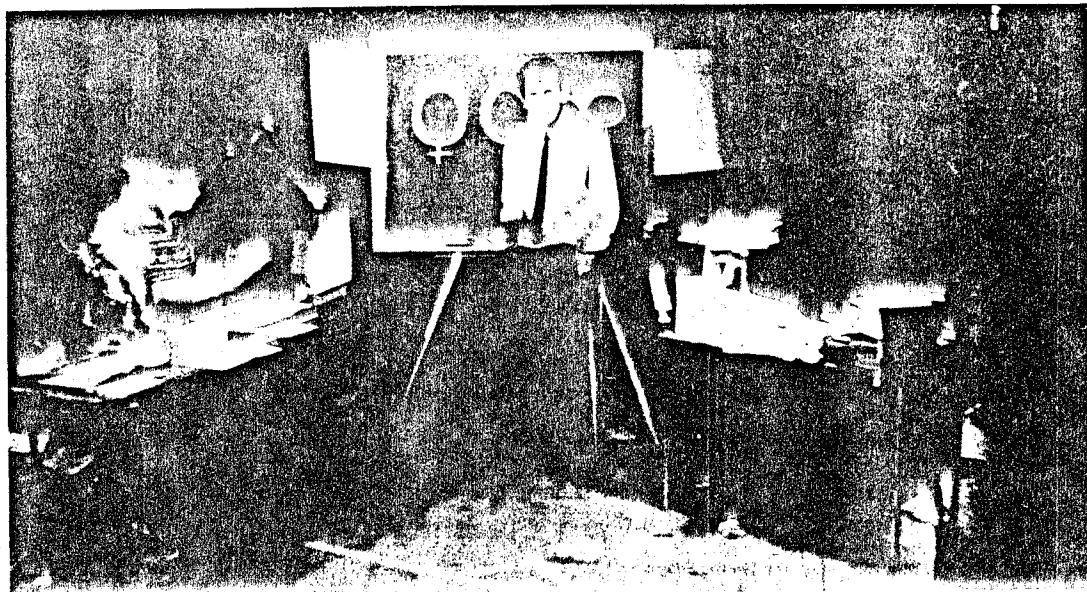
BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE: LESSONS IN PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS

Composed, designed, and directed by Mario-Erik Paoli.

With Rick Brown, Yvette Torell, Judy Collins, and Nancy Adams. Music produced at the Boston Film/Video Foundation.

At MOBIUS, 354 Congress St., 542-7416. Playing through Saturday, Nov. 1 at 8 pm. Admission is \$5.

By SIMSON GARFINKEL



“WERE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?” begins the performance. In the center of the stage, a man, perhaps a college professor, stands before a chalkboard and a video monitor. To the audience's right is his office: a poorly lit, dusty space, piled high with old books and antique instruments of science.

“So we are back in the gay '90s, and all the big-time scientists were discouraging people from studying physics because the field was overcrowded and there was not much left to know. Newton was king and the universe was a billiard ball table,” the professor, Rick Brown, continues.

For the next 77 minutes, Brown discusses the development and current state of particle physics. But this is no ordinary lecture, and the chorus is not a group of ordinary students. Brown's five 12-minute

lectures concentrate on the absurdity and the uncertainty that plague the science. The lecture is funny, it is witty, and it is all true. Technical descriptions are interspersed with clever examples and philosophical reflections. Music and video se-

quences punctuate the monologue.

Although an understanding of particle physics is mandatory to catch all of the references, there is always the chorus to watch. While Brown lectures, the three women in the chorus listen, act, and react

to what he says. Clearly improvisational, their performances had the feeling of a well choreographed dance of the absurd. One member takes notes of every third concept that Brown mentions and holds up the paper for the audience to read; another deals a deck of tarot cards; a third stuffs confetti into a toaster. They quietly play with staplers, dolls, and art supplies. Between lectures they freewheel, exploring each other, their props and the minds of the audience.

“Before and After Science” felt like a metaphysical version of Quantum Physics I (8.04) or Physical Chemistry (5.61), with Brown a surrealist combination of Mr. Rogers, Mr. Wizzard, and Jonathan King. The emphasis on randomness, unpredictability, and the limitations of scientific understanding were refreshing and satisfying after my six-and-a-half semesters of MIT. Viewing this performance will be downright therapeutic for many. Director Paoli's observations and conclusions are far from obvious or common.

By day Brown teaches film and video production in the Newton public school system. After the performance he explained how he drew on his experiences from teaching for the construction of his character. “If anybody had asked a question, I would have done my best to answer it,” he said. But from curtain to curtain he was the only one who spoke.

Simply seeing the set for this performance is well worth the price of admission. “Before and After Science” won't let you down.

The best and worst movies on the town

♦♦ **Blue Velvet** — David Lynch's weird tale of sexual perversity is interesting in its presentation of the darker side of life, but the humor is incongruous with the serious subject matter. At the Nickelodeon and Harvard Square.

♦♦♦ **Children of a Lesser God** — A beautiful, moving love story between deaf pupil (Marlee Matlin) and teacher (William Hurt) with fabulous acting performances by the principals. At the Cheri and Harvard Square.

♦♦♦ **The Color of Money** — Scorsese directs and Paul Newman and Tom Cruise star in this excellent sequel to the 1961 “Hustler.” Cruise is a hotshot pool shark being stakehoused by Newman but the film is less about pool than it is about deception and personal redemption. At the Charles.

♦♦ **Crocodile Dundee** — Paul Hogan is likeable as the Australian from the Northern Territories and the scenes in the outback are gorgeous. But the story bogs down once it moves to New York. At the Cheri and Circle theaters.

♦♦♦ **Down By Law** — A quirky and enjoyable tale about three losers who end up

together in the same jail cell. Occasionally surprising with its intelligence and wit, it does not explode on the screen and requires patience for full enjoyment. At the Nickelodeon.

♦♦ **The Fly** — Guaranteed gross-out but don't expect any great acting or much of a plot. Jeff Goldblum undergoes gradual transformation to a six-foot, talking insect and Geena Davis oohs and ahs a lot. Opening with “Aliens” on Oct. 31.

♦ **Jumpin' Jack Flash** — Whoopi Goldberg's talents are wasted in this silly tale of computer operator who finds herself immersed in international espionage through her terminal. Her romantic involvement with an invisible spy is even less believable. At the Cinema 57, Circle, and Somerville theaters.

♦♦ **Ménage** — Gérard Depardieu and Miou-Miou star in this bizarre French film chronicling a trio's journey of damnation into the underworld. This film refuses to be taken seriously and ultimately defies classification. At the Nickelodeon.

♦♦♦ **My American Cousin** — During the summer of '59, Sandy's cousin from California unexpectedly visits her home in

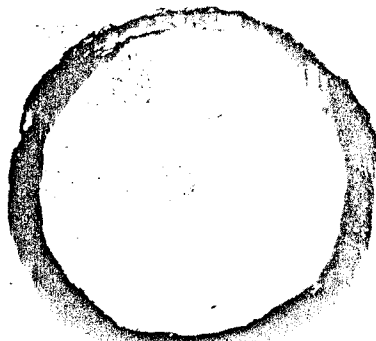
British Columbia, adding spice to her dull life. Proof that Canadians make more than just great hockey players. At Copley Place.

♦ **The Name of the Rose** — Umberto Eco's book about the importance and beauty of books is reduced to nothing more than a detective story set in a monastery in 1327. Sean Connery stars as the sleuth, William of Baskerville. At the Charles and Harvard Square.

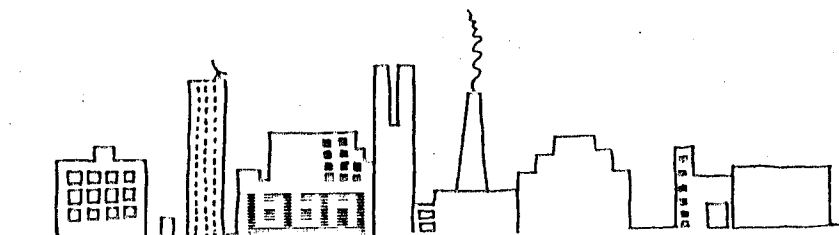
♦♦♦ **Peggy Sue Got Married** — Kathleen Turner and Nicolas Cage star in a Francis Ford Coppola film about what a woman wishes she had done when she was eighteen. At the Cheri and Somerville theaters.

♦♦♦ **She's Gotta Have It** — Sex, that is. She's pretty and has three lovers. A delightful comedy of sexual manners. At the Nickelodeon and Harvard Square.

♦♦♦ **True Stories** — David Byrne's funny and absurd vision of life culls unlikely stories from a weekly tabloid to deposit them in the town of Virgil, Texas. The black and white characters from these stories are molded into real, likeable people. At the Nickelodeon and Harvard Square. Compiled by Peter Dunn from Tech reviews



Being pregnant



NEXT SCHOOL?

Think about the time and energy spent

your creativity. We provide a stimulat-



A nation of thieves

The Nation Thief, presented by Stage Left and Arts For a New Nicaragua, adopted from Robert Houston's novel by David Perrigo, directed by Downing Cless, music by Jeffry Steele, Thursday-Saturdays though December 14 (except Thanksgiving), at 40 Boylston Street, Boston, 8:30 pm (Dec. 13 & 14 at 7:30 and 9:30). 643-8032.

One hundred and thirty years ago, William Walker and his band of privateers took over the independent country of Nicaragua and established a military government there. *The Nation Thief* tells that story as seen by Guy Sartain (Wiley Moore), a black surgeon who accompanied Walker.

Guy Sartain is an outsider, a stranger, bound to Walker out of necessity. Although the action revolves around Sartain, he is apart from it, an outsider who feels more kinship with the Nicaraguans than with his American comrades.

Moore also plays the part of Chelon, the Americans' Nicaraguan guide. In both roles, Moore instills a sense of despair and regret resulting from Walker's invasion.

The thought of a few dozen Americans taking over a Central American country seems completely unreal to a modern audience. How could it be possible? How could fifty men dominate and control an entire country — a country whose geography they didn't know, a country whose language they did not speak?

The Nation Thief answers these questions, but only in very superficial terms. The play is more concerned with issues of conscience than historical fact. The play focuses on development of morality in some characters, insanity in others, acceptance in the natives, resentment and spite in all, with a touch of romantic intrigue on the side. It is an exhausting play to watch, leaving the audience feeling as drained as Nicaragua.

David Perrigo plays the parts of Talmedge Warner, one of Walker's happy-go-lucky mercenaries, and also of Brian Holdich and Cornelius Vanderbilt, "the most powerful man in the United States." Perrigo — playwright as well as star — changes his speech and his mannerisms as easily as he changes his costume, while remaining convincing in all of his roles. Playing the only comic character in the historical tragedy, Perrigo verges on over-acting — especially when commenting on the "seven eager Nicaraguan women" awaiting him in Central America.

Playing more roles than anyone else in the cast, Josefina Bosch gave me the impression that there were two women in the production; I was amazed when I realized that they were the same. In this world of domination and destruction, Bosch plays Rachel Bingham, who finds love in Hell, and Irena O'Horan, who loses everything to Walker's madness.

If I had to choose one word to describe the production of *The Nation Thief*, it would be "control." Everything about this play, from the lighting and music to the costumes, acting and script is controlled with the highest precision. As I experienced the play, I was struck by the stark contrast between this control and the world of chaos and disorder which the play depicts.

Jeffry Steele — who also composed the play's ever-present music — personifies this control in the character of William Walker. Walker is a genius, seizing Nicaragua with a mere handful of men and building a personal empire. Walker is a madman, the central source of evil, who possesses the charisma to convince others to follow him along his evil path. Steele plays the role hauntingly, as if he were a ghost. His performance alone is worth the admission.

Previously, I have seen Stage Left productions of *We Won't Pay, We Won't Pay* and *La Ultima Banana en Managua* (The Last Banana in Managua). Although these performances were good, *The Nation Thief* greatly surpasses them in staging, acting, content and direction. *The Nation Thief* is a highly polished performance, worthy of far more applause than can be done here.

Simson L. Garfinkel

Elegant strings introduced the setting of quite ambitious to tackle such a di-

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Violins and violas created a near-visual il-
jungle beat in *On Watch*.

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In *Madame* r
jok 9, 8, 14

of synthesizer-cat and human-mouse, all tured two pianos, multiple percussion in- and taped material, was a favorite of some the Wiesner Building, 121 57

Unique performance at MOBIUS

HOW TO PLAY THE SYNTHESIZER (ANALOG)

EFFICIENT CYCLING TECHNIQUES

Presented by the Laymen Lecture Series.

Performed by Andrew Neumann.

Remaining performances Oct. 10 and 11.

8 pm at MOBIUS (542-7416).

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

MOBIUS is, among other things, a space for experimental performance artists to perform in. The most interesting performances I have witnessed in Boston over the past three years have been held there. Last weekend, I had the unique experience of being present at the opening night of Andrew Neumann's lectures.

The experience was unique because nobody else attended. Perhaps Thursday night is the wrong night for experimental artists to open shows in Boston. I wasn't sure about what was going on, so I asked if it would be better if I came back the next night.

"No," I was informed a few minutes later, "he wants to do it anyway."

I entered the theater and watched Andrew Neumann perform two half-hour lectures. Neumann's material was good,

but he definitely needed the practice of an additional dress rehearsal. Despite his roughness and occasionally stumbled lines, the evening was an enjoyable one.

How to Play the Synthesizer (Analog) was about, well, how to play the synthesizer. Neumann answered fundamental questions, such as "What is sound," "What is a synthesizer," and "What is analog." Although his descriptions of voltage controlled oscillators, filters, and amplifiers were rather superficial, most of the concepts were demonstrated on one of the three synthesizers that accompanied him on the stage. His discussion of "the propagation of airwaves that move through the air" was rather humorous. The highpoint of the lecture occurred when Neumann connected his three synthesizers together to produce an ensemble of sound.

Efficient Cycling Techniques was the less informative of the two lectures, but felt closer to stream-of-consciousness experimental performances I have witnessed before at MOBIUS. A movie projector and indoor bicycle trainer added an unexpected sense of realism to the performance. The prospects of learning anything about bicycling from this lecture are slim, but the performance was well worth watching.



The Tech is pleased to announce the return of...

The Tech Performing Arts Series,

a service for the entire MIT community from *The Tech*, in conjunction with the *Technology Community Association*, MIT's student community service organization.

Special reduced-price tickets now available for:

KRYSTIAN ZIMERMAN

Pianist **Krystian Zimerman** will play Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann in Symphony Hall, Friday October 17, 8 pm. *MIT price \$5*

ANNER BYLSMA & MALCOLM BILSON

Dutch cello virtuoso **Anner Bylsma** and American fortepianist **Malcolm Bilson**, among the world's foremost authentic instrument performers, will play rarely heard chamber works of Beethoven in a recital next month.

Jordan Hall, Oct. 25, 8 pm. *MIT price \$3.50*

ARTS

Inside A Legend *is ambitious, exciting, informative*

INSIDE A LEGEND: IMAGES OF ST. JOAN

*Conceived and performed by Mari Novotny-Jones. Technical direction and design by Bob Raymond. Video by Dan Lang with David Miller.
At Mobius, 354 Congress St., Boston.*

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

WITHOUT A DOUBT, *Inside a Legend* was one of the most ambitious productions I have witnessed at Mobius. In addition to Mari Novotny-Jones' moving performance, there were slides, two video tapes, and a participatory installation outside the theater. The piece was a personal exploration of St. Joan of Arc, "the simple peasant girl, who with God's help, saved France."

We were requested to arrive half an hour before curtain so that we could experience the introductory installation. As

we entered the outer room, a tape began playing telling the story of St. Joan of Arc, the teenage heroine who led the French in victory over the English at the battle of Orléans in 1429. The fifteen-minute tape repeated twice, detailing St. Joan's life from the day she first heard voices while playing tag with her friends until the day that she was burned at the stake by the Inquisition. ("They removed her heart from the ashes. It would not burn.")

Accompanying the tape was a slideshow with images of St. Joan, a toy-soldier mockup of the Battle of Orléans, a confessional booth with tape recorder, burnt food, cheese, and newspaper clippings featuring reviews of Joan of Arc performances and advertisements for the supernatural.

The contrast between the taped narrative and the advertisements selling magical holy water from France was profound. The installation established a conflict be-

tween the historical St. Joan and modern impressions of her and Catholicism in general. This conflict is perpetuated throughout the piece.

Novotny-Jones' performance begins with a short narrative of St. Joan but shifts immediately to her childhood memories ("The first time I met Joan of Arc I was seven years old. . ."), her first communion, and descriptions of growing up in the Catholic school system.

As we follow the story of her life, we are taken back again and again to incidents and happenings in St. Joan's. Never does the comparison appear to be strained. The presence of St. Joan in Novotny-Jones' life becomes tangible to the audience.

The performance, which lasted over two hours, featured many key elements of Joan's experience, including the confession, voices, visions, ordeals, and gregorian chants. The line between the history of Joan of Arc and the history of Mari

Novotny-Jones remained clear at all times, but the distinction became less important as the evening progressed.

Unfortunately, the piece was too long. It could have been shortened without a loss of purpose by elimination of the references to "Joan of Arc Brie Cheese" and a few other incidentals. Additionally, a video on Vietnam during the segment "Joan of Arc: The Heroic" seemed strongly out of place; it wasn't the purpose of the performance to make a statement on Vietnam.

Technically, the orchestration of sound, lights, video and props was well performed, except that Bob Raymond should not have needed to cue for successive slides.

Despite these reservations, *Inside a Legend* was an exciting and informative performance by a very powerful and talented actress. Clearly Mari Novotny-Jones gave of herself and deeply cared about her subject. There is not much higher praise to be given.

The Tech proudly presents. . .

The Tech Performing Arts Series

a service for the entire MIT community from *The Tech*,
in conjunction with the Technology Community Association, MIT's student community service organization.

Special reduced-price tickets now available for the following events:

Cantata Singers

The world premiere of MIT Professor John Harbison's *Flight into Egypt* will be part of the concert of the Cantata Singers in Jordan Hall, Friday, Nov. 21, 8 pm. Also featured: Bach's cantata *Wachet Auf*, BWV 64, and short pieces by Schütz. MIT price: \$5.

Jose Feghali

Jose Feghali, gold medal winner of the Seventh Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, will give a recital in Jordan Hall on Sunday, Dec. 7 at 3 pm. The program features works by Mozart, Chopin, Debussy and Prokofiev. MIT price: \$3.50.

Well-done propaganda

La Ultima Banana En Managua (The Last Banana in Managua), conceived and performed by David Perrigo, directed by Downing Cless, Thursday, Friday and Saturday through Nov. 17 at 8 pm; admission \$5; 53 Berkley St., (Local 26); 247-1577.

This is the best piece of propaganda I have ever seen. The show makes for effective propaganda because it is compelling drama and well-produced; the novel format grabs the theater-goer, who can't help being ensnared by the super-charged ideology.

La Ultima Banana En Managua is performed in English by David Perrigo alone, but with lots of technical support. Perrigo plays a fumbling CIA agent who has been sent down to Nicaragua to infiltrate the native community as an American tourist. He is supposed to find out why the American-sponsored "Freedom Fighters" have been having such a hard time winning back the country. He tours around Nicaragua and stays with a Sandanistan family in Managua. The play recounts a series of incidents and adventures that happen to him while he is in the country.

I last saw David Perrigo in Downing Cless's production of *We Won't Pay, We*

Won't Pay. In that production too, Perrigo played many roles. Since then, Perrigo has refined his art to the point where he can be several people on the stage at the same time.

But the technical assistance is indispensable to the success of the performance: slides, voices, light changes, more slides: all combine to give the viewer the impression that the stage is filled with many characters, not one lone actor. The net effect is that of quality drama which does not reflect the low budget of this production.

What makes the play effective as a propaganda tool is the supporting evidence which is presented hand-in-hand with the dialogue. The "scenery" for the play consists of a large collection of slides from Nicaragua; basically, Perrigo performs in front of a slide show. The slides take the audience down to Managua with Perrigo, and translate his words into the "reality" we are supposed to see. Perrigo, as a 16-year-old Sandanista, says that the people were unhappy under Somosa, but are now content and lead fulfilled lives. A slide of smiling children meanwhile conveniently appears on screen.

(Please turn to page 16)



David Perrigo is beside himself in *La Ultima Banana en Managua*.

Bananas

(Continued from page 11)

La Ultima Banana En Managua is based on Perrigo's recent trip to Nicaragua, and the play is to benefit the Central American Referendum Campaign, an organization that is trying to get the United States out of Central America with a non-binding question on today's election ballot. It is a dramatically charged play about a very politically charged question.

La Ultima Banana showed me a side of the Nicaraguan conflict that I had never been exposed to before. But politics aside, it is a very moving presentation and well worth the three block walk from the Arlington stop on the Green line. You don't have to be a Communist sympathizer to enjoy this production.

Simson L. Garfinkei

ARTS

Feminist rewalks the stations of the cross through Mary's eyes

An Installation-Performance
by Deborah M. Boardman.

Performed by Mary Castiglione.

Sound by Kip Boardman.

At Mobius, Feb. 11-14.

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

MOBIOUS HAS BECOME Mary's Room. It could be a small Catholic chapel, and the audience could be pilgrims for some kind of strange, feminist/religious reenactment.

The room is dimly lit, yet the fourteen murals — each symbolizing a Station of Mary — are clearly visible on the walls. The murals are emotional, violent, richly detailed and large: a good 7'x14'. They make a powerful backdrop for Deborah M. Boardman's 14 Stations of Mary.

The Stations are loosely based on the Catholic Stations of Cross, or Christ's Passion. In these stations, Boardman attempts to resolve her conflicts between religion and sensuality, between her desire for spirituality and the position of woman within the Catholic Church.

Each station begins in darkness. Slowly, a spot of light widens upon Mary Castiglione's body. In some of the stations, Castiglione's shadow towers behind on her on the walls and ceiling. Author Boardman also works the lights, and her control of the light source — a handheld flashlight — is remarkable.

Station 1: Mary Performs the rituals of high priestess.

Before the performance begins, the audience enters and experiences the installation. There is canvas on the floor, in the shape of a cross, with small clumps of Mary's hair marking and decorating the edges. On the benches which are our seats there are missals or Bibles, each one different, depicting the 14 stations of Mary.

Castiglione's performance is strong, but not up to the power of the set. The set, music, and smells overpower the senses. Castiglione, by comparison, is a small, frail Mary, trapped in the images of Catholicism turned on its head. She seems larger on the stage than in real life, but still not large enough for the performance.

In the performance, Mary explores her sexuality, her relationship to man, her Catholic upbringing, herself. "I was raised Catholic," said Boardman after the show, but she added that she isn't any more: "Spirituality is important to me, but I don't defend it in terms of an institution."

Station 8: Mary disrobes. She sees herself, her vulnerability. She sees how easy it is to feel violated and she feels afraid, ashamed, maybe it is her fault, her womanness.

Mary gazes into the broken mirror, transfixed before her naked image. Unfortunately, the impact of this moment is lost on the audience because Mary's image passes too quickly from sight.

The Tech Performing Arts Series presents...

SINFONOVA

SinfoNova, is an extraordinary chamber orchestra, and their Mozart is especially divine.

So don't miss their 5th anniversary concert — also to be given in New York's Carnegie Hall — in which Anthony di Bonaventura will perform

Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 14. Also on the imaginative program chosen by conductor Aram Gharabekian is the world premiere of *Adagio in Memory of Aram Khachaturian* by Soviet Armenian composer Edward Mirzoyan,

Rossini's String Sonata No. 6,

Pärt's Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten and Mahler's orchestration of

Schubert's Death and the Maiden.

Jordan Hall, March 4 at 8pm. MIT price: \$3.

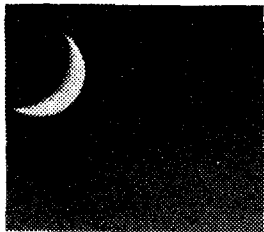
SPANISH DANCE

The Ramon de Los Reyes Spanish Dance Theatre will present a program entitled "Bravo Flamenco/Samba Brazil," featuring new choreography by de los Yeyes to Ravel's *Bolero* and Afro-Brazilian dance, music and theatre. John Hancock Hall, Boston. March 4 & 5 at 8pm. MIT price: \$5

MUSICA VIVA

The Boston Musica Viva will give a program entitled "Jazz Accents," which includes the US premiere of *War Play* by Kurt Weill/David Drew, a work which resets Weill's incidental music written for the 1936 production of Paul Greene's play *Johnny Johnson*.

Jordan Hall, March 18 at 8pm. MIT price: \$4.50.



TECHNOLOGY FOR A NEW AGE

Who Do You Call

A R T S

Good ol' Charlie Brown wins one for TRME

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN.

Presented by the MIT Tech Random Music Ensemble. Based on the comic strip "Peanuts" by Charles M. Schultz. Book by John Gordon. Music and Lyrics by Clark Gesner. Produced by Leah Bateman '90. Directed by Steve Gisselbrecht '90. Playing Friday, Saturday, 8:00pm in 34-101.

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

IT IS HARD TO PRODUCE a musical that doesn't have a plot. Without a story line to carry it through, the music, set, staging and especially the acting are all of critical importance: any one failing is enough to spoil the evening.

The current production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, succeeds as a sharp, clean endeavor, well worthy of the talent of the people involved. There are few throw-away lines, fewer wasted bars, and not a moment to take the eyes from

the stage to read the amusing program.

Room 34-101 makes as good a setting as any for "a day in the life of Charlie Brown," a timeless time in the 1950s, 60s or 70s or 80s, a placeless place in some small town, somewhere in the United States. The room's lecture stage is an interesting space and the actors all work well within it, although I would have liked to have seen the action leave the floor and explore the aisles from time to time.

Kelly Marold's delivery of Peppermint Patty's response to Lucy's "crabbiness survey" was quick, succinct, and terribly funny. Unfortunately, Marold never succeeded in defining the character as the Peppermint Patty I remembered from my childhood, probably because the musical was written before that character was created by Schultz. (Patty of the 1960s strip was not the same as Peppermint Patty of the late 1970s.) To their credit, the players have attempted to update the book, but they lose it in places.

A college professor in the body of a five-year-old, Tom Wethern '89, played the role of Linus with a combination of wit



Georgina A. Maldonado/The Tech
Kelly Marold as Patty, Tom Wethern as Linus, and Drea Brandford as Lucy in TRME's production of the musical "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown."



Linus and Patty in front of the doghouse.

Georgina A. Maldonado/The Tech

and candor. He succeeded in directing his pseudo-intellectual comments wistfully at himself, rather than at the audience as must have been the temptation. Wethern worked well with his blanket, especially during their dancing/singing duet.

Larry Labell '88 sketched a standoffish sort of Schroeder. He was clearly more interested in playing his music than in relating to Lucy, or for that matter the rest of the cast. Appropriately so. Labell plays a convincing "air piano" — chords with the left hand, melody with the right. Of course, it is easier when you don't have to hit the right notes.

As Lucy, Drea Brandford '89 makes a

convincing crabby, spoiled, five-year-old. But Tamar Schulman '91 stole the show as Snoopy. Perched atop her dog house, dancing, prancing, playing the World War One Flying Ace, or merely lounging about, she never failed to bring grins and chuckles to the audience. Twelve years of dancing instruction have left their mark on Schulman; she carried herself with grace and style befitting Schultz's creation.

The band, nearly as large as the cast, did justice to the rich and well-tempered score. My only disappointment was that Snoopy's jew's harp could not be heard
(Please turn to page 13)

actor was to spring to life when so-instructed by a "score" written for the computer controller.

Two bands, *Press and Blasphemy* played on a catwalk about 40 feet in the air. Both

to pass laser beams through it onto the walls. Instead, they bought the wrong kind of fog and this resulted in sporadic little bursts that looked more like a leaky pipe than a high-tech light show.

blender with a gramophone speaker attached, a couple of ceiling fans, and a trash can. The blender periodically turned itself on and swirled some water around — kitchen appliance does not a multimedia spectacle make.

Both Joe Chung and David Atherton said that one of their aims was to illustrate the relationship between high-tech and low-tech. They succeeded neither in illustrating the relationship, nor the abilities of either. If they had used enough high-tech, they might have awed and entertained. Enough low-tech would have been amusingly surreal and possibly engaging. As it happened, the production was dreary, pedestrian and consistently boring.

Divertimenti, March, was executed with vivid, aggressive dynamics, *pizzicato* and *glissando* passages combining to thrilling effect. The melody of the *Waltz* was brought out to sad, lyrical effect, the *Burlesque* was tensively rendered.

Beethoven's *Quartet No. 16 in F, Op. 44, No. 2* was crisply played, giving the *Vivace* a good measure of spice. The concentration evident in the third movement was telling, too. At other times, though, there was an evident lack of warmth or introspection.

The concert ended with Mendelssohn's *Quartet in E minor, Op. 44, No. 2*. Boldly cast, and brightly colored, it left a powerful and lasting impression.

TRME brings "Peanuts" characters to life in musical production of the comic strips

(Continued from page 12)

over the accompaniment. Congratulations is due to Aimee Yermish '88 for her coordination as musical director in addition to her performance on the keyboard.

It was relatively easy to identify the characters as they appeared on stage, a tribute both to the familiarity of the Peanuts comic strip and the talent of Kelly Marold, who doubled as costume designer. Marold's third contribution as set designer should also be applauded: Using three plywood boxes and a few hand-held flats, the

actors were able to create the illusion of a television set, a piano, park benches, small trees and other childhood necessities. This is low-budget theatre working in action.

Perhaps the only disappointment of the show was Jonathan Monsarrat '89 in the title role, but the disappointment is only a minor one. If it is possible, he was ineffectual at being ineffectual, wishy-washy at being wishy-washy. But it was hard to feel sorry for this "Good ol' Charlie Brown." Which is to say, of course, that he played the role exactly as it was intended.

The world, and the theater, according to Stoppard in *Dramashop's The Real Thing*

(Continued from page 12)

changes often took a distractingly long

Vandalism is what I call wreck-creation. Wrecking other people's property. Very selfish. Not very cool. Find out what you can do to stop it. If you see

someone trashing your school, library, corner drug store — anywhere! — call the police. You don't even have to give your name. To help...

The Tech Performing Arts Series presents...

BRANDENBURG ENSEMBLE

Peter Serkin will join the Brandenburg Ensemble in a concert of Bach's *Concerto in A* and *Concerto in E*, and the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 3*, Handel's *Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 6*, and Vivaldi's *Sinfonia from Al Santo Sepulchro*.

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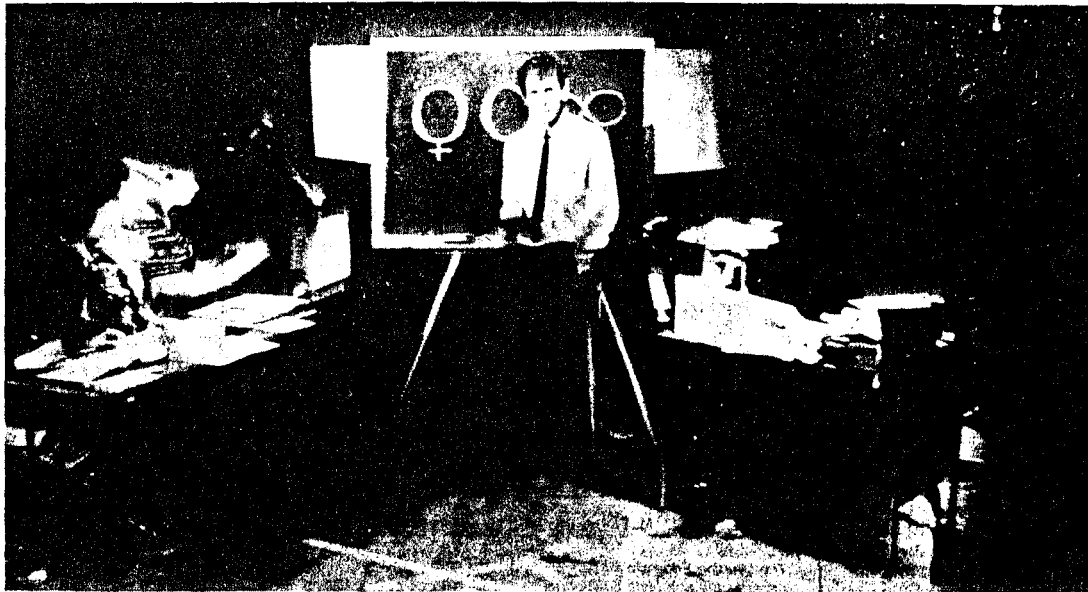
ARTS

A refreshing look at the limitations of scientific understanding

**BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE:
LESSONS IN PHYSICS
AND METAPHYSICS**

Composed, designed, and directed by Mario-Erik Paoli.
With Rick Brown, Yvette Torell, Judy Collins, and Nancy Adams.
Music produced at the Boston Film/Video Foundation.
At MOBIUS, 354 Congress St., 542-7416
Playing through Saturday, Nov. 1 at 8 pm.
Admission is \$5.

By SIMSON GARFINKEL



“WERE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?” begins the performance. In the center of the stage, a man, perhaps a college professor, stands before a chalkboard and a video monitor. To the audience’s right is his office: a poorly lit, dusty space, piled high with old books and antique instruments of science.

“So we are back in the gay ’90s, and all the big-time scientists were discouraging people from studying physics because the field was overcrowded and there was not much left to know. Newton was king and the universe was a billiard ball table,” the professor, Rick Brown, continues.

For the next 77 minutes, Brown discusses the development and current state of particle physics. But this is no ordinary lecture, and the chorus is not a group of ordinary students. Brown’s five 12-minute

lectures concentrate on the absurdity and the uncertainty that plague the science. The lecture is funny, it is witty, and it is all true. Technical descriptions are interspersed with clever examples and philosophical reflections. Music and video se-

quences punctuate the monologue. Although an understanding of particle physics is mandatory to catch all of the references, there is always the chorus to watch. While Brown lectures, the three women in the chorus listen, act, and react

to what he says. Clearly improvisational, their performances had the feeling of a well choreographed dance of the absurd. One member takes notes of every third concept that Brown mentions and holds up the paper for the audience to read; another deals a deck of tarot cards; a third stuffs confetti into a toaster. They quietly play with staplers, dolls, and art supplies. Between lectures they freewheel, exploring each other, their props and the minds of the audience.

“Before and After Science” felt like a metaphysical version of Quantum Physics I (8.04) or Physical Chemistry (5.61), with Brown a surrealistic combination of Mr. Rogers, Mr. Wizzard, and Jonathan King. The emphasis on randomness, unpredictability, and the limitations of scientific understanding were refreshing and satisfying after my six-and-a-half semesters of MIT. Viewing this performance will be downright therapeutic for many. Director Paoli’s observations and conclusions are far from obvious or common.

By day Brown teaches film and video production in the Newton public school system. After the performance he explained how he drew on his experiences from teaching for the construction of his character. “If anybody had asked a question, I would have done my best to answer it,” he said. But from curtain to curtain he was the only one who spoke.

Simply seeing the set for this performance is well worth the price of admission. “Before and After Science” won’t let you down.

The best and worst movies on the town

*** **Blue Velvet** — David Lynch’s weird tale of sexual perversity is interesting in its presentation of the darker side of life, but the humor is incongruous with the serious subject matter. At the Nickelodeon and Harvard Square.

**** **Children of a Lesser God** — A beautiful, moving love story between deaf pupil (Marlee Matlin) and teacher (William Hurt) with fabulous acting performances by the principals. At the Cheri and Harvard Square.

**** **The Color of Money** — Scorsese directs and Paul Newman and Tom Cruise star in this excellent sequel to the 1961 “Hustler.” Cruise is a hotshot pool shark being stakehorsed by Newman but the film is less about pool than it is about deception and personal redemption. At the Charles.

** **Crocodile Dundee** — Paul Hogan is likeable as the Australian from the Northern Territories and the scenes in the outback are gorgeous. But the story bogs down once it moves to New York. At the Cheri and Circle theaters.

*** **Down By Law** — A quirky and enjoyable tale about three losers who end up

together in the same jail cell. Occasionally surprising with its intelligence and wit, it does not explode on the screen and requires patience for full enjoyment. At the Nickelodeon.

** **The Fly** — Guaranteed gross-out but don’t expect any great acting or much of a plot. Jeff Goldblum undergoes gradual transformation to a six-foot, talking insect and Geena Davis oohs and ahs a lot. Opening with “Aliens” on Oct. 31.

* **Jumpin’ Jack Flash** — Whoopi Goldberg’s talents are wasted in this silly tale of computer operator who finds herself immersed in international espionage through her terminal. Her romantic involvement with an invisible spy is even less believable. At the Cinema 57, Circle, and Somerville theaters.

** **Menage** — Gérard Depardieu and Miou-Miou star in this bizarre French film chronicling a trio’s journey of damnation into the underworld. This film refuses to be taken seriously and ultimately defies classification. At the Nickelodeon.

*** **My American Cousin** — During the summer of ’59, Sandy’s cousin from California unexpectedly visits her home in

British Columbia, adding spice to her dull life. Proof that Canadians make more than just great hockey players. At Copley Place.

* **The Name of the Rose** — Umberto Eco’s book about the importance and beauty of books is reduced to nothing more than a detective story set in a monastery in 1327. Sean Connery stars as the sleuth, William of Baskerville. At the Charles and Harvard Square.

**** **Peggy Sue Got Married** — Kathleen Turner and Nicolas Cage star in a Francis Ford Coppola film about what a woman wishes she had done when she was eighteen. At the Cheri and Somerville theaters.

**** **She’s Gotta Have It** — Sex, that is. She’s pretty and has three lovers. A delightful comedy of sexual manners. At the Nickelodeon and Harvard Square.

**** **True Stories** — David Byrne’s funny and absurd vision of life culls unlikely stories from a weekly tabloid to deposit them in the town of Virgil, Texas. The black and white characters from these stories are molded into real, likeable people. At the Nickelodeon and Harvard Square. Compiled by Peter Dunn from Tech reviews

Being pregnant

NEXT SCHOOL?

Think about the time and energy spent your creativity. We provide a stimulat-

ARTS

More nights of rehearsal help A Little Night Music

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.
Book by Hugh Wheeler.
The Tech Random Music Ensemble.
Directed by Lee Hunter.
Hayden Courtyard, August 11 to 14.

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

TRME'S MOST AMBITIOUS performance to date, *A Little Night Music*, did not live up to the ensemble's year-old reputation for low-budget, high-quality performances. Nevertheless, it was a winning effort, considering the hurdles faced by the group.

Night Music's principal problem was not one of acting but of volume, or rather, the actors' volume. Unfortunately, there was no problem hearing the orchestra's muddy brass section and the woodwinds that couldn't, or just wouldn't, stay in meter.

Mostly up to standard was the singing; when audible, it was the driving force that

brought *Night Music* together. Director Lee Hunter stresses the fact that TRME's performers are actors, not singers. Nevertheless, their voices were true, rich, and brimming with feeling.

There was nothing about this performance that another week of rehearsal couldn't have fixed. Even the voices of Count Malcolm Carl-Magnus (Paul Selkirk) and the beautiful Mrs. Anne Egerman (Leah Bateman '90), which seemed flat and shallow on opening night, were filled with vitality and passion by the show's close. Unfortunately, by the show's fourth day, the new-found emotion had come at the cost of scratched and spent voices.

A Little Night Music, which remains one of Stephen Sondheim's best musicals, is the story of Fredrik Egerman (Steve Gisselbrecht '90), an aging lawyer, who has married the 18-year-old Anne 11 months before the play begins. Much to Fredrik's chagrin, Anne is still a virgin, herself fearful of the wedding bed. Seeking female



Simson L. Garfinkel/The Tech

...only to find his wife running off with his son.

companionship, Fredrik visits an old lover, the actress Desiree Armfeldt (Tami Schulman '91). Fredrik is discovered in Desiree's dressing room, clad in a robe, by the married Carl-Magnus, who keeps Desiree as his mistress.

In an attempt to steal Fredrik away from his youthful bride and win a father for her illegitimate daughter Fredrika (Catherine Crimp), Desiree invites the Egerman family to a weekend in the country at the chateau of her mother (Frances Surprenant). Carl-Magnus learns of the plans through his wife (Aimee Yermish '88) and the two stop by the Armfeldt estate as uninvited visitors.

Like the plotline, TRME's production was a story of unexpected surprises and compromises which somehow, however unlikely, led to a happy ending. Two weeks before opening night, the director lost the first Desiree Armfeldt and brought on Tami Schulman, who had less than a week and a half to learn her lines, songs, and blocking. Schulman might very well have stolen the show if she had been a member of the cast from the beginning. As it was,

her performance was still a cut above the majority of the cast.

TRME could not afford to provide its actors with microphones. Given that limitation, music director Larry DeLuca should have found some way to keep the orchestra from overwhelming the soloists. *Night Music's* "revolving orchestra," which featured over 30 different musicians during the weeks of rehearsals and performances, was simply not up to TRME's standards.

TRME is an outgrowth of the Spring 1987 East Campus/Senior House production of *Hair*. More recently, the group has put on *The Robber Bridegroom*, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. The fact that they have done so much with so little (the group does not even have its own rehearsal space or a place to stow props) is a testimony to the will, commitment and talent of the people involved. What TRME needs now, besides more people, is funding, a place to call home, and a really bang-up show for Fall 1988.



Simson L. Garfinkel/The Tech

Henrik plans a Rendezvous with Desire. . .