

THE
STONY
BROOK

PRESS

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MANDATORY MADNESS

"The programs of the University Health Service should be strengthened and expanded in order to create an excellent college health service. The service should provide the services generally offered by a family physician in an effective and convenient manner." This is the first recommendation of a long list in the proposal written by the Student Health Service Planning Committee, which seeks to improve the operations of the UHS, which basically means the infirmary. While the intentions of the committee, convened last June by Dr Fred Preston, VP of Student Affairs and Dr Howard Oakes, VP of Health Sciences are more than admirable, why does the committee feel the need to request that a thirty-five dollar fee be tacked on to the money already paid out each semester by students in the form of tuition?

The proposal, as outlined by the committee, is excellent. Increased operating hours, a larger staff, free pharmaceuticals (excluding contraceptives), free lab tests, and a same-day appointment schedule designed to eliminate the long wait before a student actually sees a physician. The proposal calls for an additional \$757,900, which will come from the Health Service Fee, in order to effect these changes. The proposal actually calls for \$54 a year per student but according to the notes of the budget "a fee of \$35 per semester is proposed to provide protection against price increases and the possibility of inaccuracies in the assumptions on which this budget is based." Not only does the administration want to force students to pay an additional \$35 per semester, but that \$35 may be more than is really necessary.

What is particularly infuriating about the proposed fee is that an administration which wastes money like it was printed on toilet paper insists, with the full agreement and cooperation of Polity Vice-President Paul Rubenstein, that students need to foot a \$760,000 bill each year for improved medical facilities on the main campus. It seems sensible that if the University Administration had put the \$175,000 that was blown on wood chips and dead plants for the academic mall to a good purpose, like better medical care, that it would be a start in the right direction—proper management of a large university. The money being used to repair the outside of the Health Sciences Center (go take a look at all the scaffolding) shouldn't even have to be spent. The HSC was completed in 1979—had the administration taken care to build the HSC properly, the

money invested in major repairs for an ancient nine-year old building would be available for the health plan.

The Student Association of the State University (SASU) is adamantly opposed to the Health Fee. Their major concern is that the fee may set a dangerous precedent—the University Administration grabbing more money out of the students' hands in the guise of "University Fees". SASU's contention is that if the administration is allowed to charge this fee by SUNY Central in Albany, what will prevent the University from creating more fees, without enduring the rigor of a tuition hike? A tuition hike is a serious request, and requires a great deal of time to prepare, as well as the permission of the state governor. All that is required for the Health Fee to go into effect this Fall semester is the approval of the SUNY system chancellor and senior vice chancellor (Jerome Konvisar and Harry Spindler), and that approval is expected at the end of this month.

Unfortunately, Dr Rachel Bergeson, the Medical Director of the University Health Service, will be caught in the crossfire between students' anger at the fee and the immediate and genuine need for improvements at the UHS. Dr Bergeson is a doctor, and the health and well-being of the student body is her primary concern. In addition to the improvements already mentioned, the plan calls for the availability of psychiatric drugs, drugs for the treatment of herpes and influenza epidemics, and Seldane, an allergy medicine that does not cause drowsiness. All of these prescriptions would be free under the guidelines of the proposal.

In addition to the Health Fee, however, the proposal also calls for a mandatory \$250-300 Student Health Insurance fee for students who cannot demonstrate adequate medical coverage of their own. The report states that "expanding the pool of policy holders will help contain the cost of insurance." Fine. But part of a person's education is learning to manage finances, including the possible medical costs involved in any serious injury or illness. Any care that cannot be provided by the UHS can be provided by the University Hospital; the Health Fee will not cover any of the costs involved in admission to the hospital. The decision to maintain adequate health insurance is strictly the decision of the individual. If a person feels

lucky, then it is his prerogative to turn down an insurance plan. Forcing \$300 yearly insurance fee down a student's throat is both wrong and grossly unfair. Although the Committee's intentions are noble, there are things in a person's life that must be decided by that person, not by the guidelines of an impersonal report. The current cost of Student Health Insurance is \$275. Since the price of the mandatory insurance fee is the same as the current *optional* fee, why make the fee mandatory? Any student who wants and needs insurance, and can afford the relatively inexpensive plan offered by the University, will go out and get the coverage.

Unlike Student Activity Fee hikes, which are voted on by the entire student body, the fees charged by the administration are not subject to the students' approval. Period. However, if the chancellors up at Albany were to receive several thousand letters asking that the Fee not be approved, perhaps they would not let the Fee go through. That is up to you. Is it worth seventy dollars a year to you to write one letter to the chancellor? You could also contact SASU for more information on lobbying up at SUNY Central. SASU is a great organization founded and operated by students for the sole purpose of seeing that the students' needs and desires are recognized by the administrations of the campuses and by SUNY Central. If you do nothing now but complain in the privacy of your own room, don't complain in September when that thirty-five bucks shows up on your tuition bill.

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Cover by William De Kooning: "Untitled XXIV", ©1986

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HEALTH FEE PLAN

Polity Leadership Split

by Kyle Silfer

The document is called "A Proposal for Improving Student Health Services on the Stony Brook Campus" and from the particulars of its thirty-three pages (including addendum), the title appears accurate. The proposal, the end product of an evaluative committee convened in June 1987 by Drs. Fred Preston and Howard Oaks (vice presidents for Student Affairs and Health Sciences, respectively), calls for dramatic improvements to the University Health Service which, at present (according to a review by independent consultants), is an ill-equipped, understaffed, unaccredited organization barely able to tend to basic student health needs.

The recommendations put forth by the plan include: increasing the size of the staff by hiring another full-time physician and three nurse's aides (presently, only one full-time physician is employed), extended op-

erating hours (including evenings and weekends), free prescription drugs (excluding contraceptives), free laboratory tests (with expanded services), and stronger mental health services (including a full-time psychiatrist). These new services would be available to any matriculated student who carried at least six credits and would, the committee hopes, allow the UHS to meet accreditation criteria, thus providing assurance that the service offered at Stony Brook holds up to national standards. In addition, the administrative composition of the Service would be changed considerably; among the alterations, responsibility for the UHS would fall from Oaks, the present head administrator, to Preston (in order to more fully coordinate all student-related services), and a student advisory board with "broad responsibility" would be installed, made up of representatives from "all major segments of the campus community."

The plan, however, has drawn criticisms from both Student Polity president Jacques Dorcelly and the Stony Brook chapter of the Student Association of the State University. The controversy stems not from the significant improvements that the University Health Service would undergo, but rather from the proposal's Recommendation 12, a provision that defines the financial source of these improvements—specifically, a mandatory student fee of \$35 per semester. The UHS, according to the document, "has been inadequately funded for many years largely because...SUNY does not obtain funding for student health services from a fee." The introduction of this fee was also urged by the two independent evaluators consulted by the committee who stated in their report that "state appropriation alone will never be sufficient to finance even minimally acceptable services."

Paul Rubenstein, vice-president of Stu-

dent Policy endorses the proposal—fee and all—eagerly. In an open letter to the campus newspapers, he describes Dorcelly's position as one based on a strict, antagonistic attitude toward Administrative policies: "Mr. Dorcelly publicly stated to me that Student Polity must oppose any actions of Administration. This is the stupidest /sic/ thing I have ever heard. This militant mentality...is stupid and counterproductive." The fee, in Rubenstein's view, is a small price to pay for the services that will be rendered.

Another matter of dispute is Recommendation 14, the institution of mandatory health insurance—a practice not uncommon among large universities. Under the guidelines of the proposal, full-time students will be required to either present proof of coverage or purchase a policy offered through SUNY Stony Brook. This would serve the dual purpose of raising additional funds for the UHS

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Testing Underway at the HSC

by Quinn Kaufman

Construction on a new ventilation system in the Health Science Center will begin spring semester in response to air quality complaints which have been occurring in the School of Social Welfare since 1978, according to Howard Oaks, Vice President for HSC.

Complaints such as faintness, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, difficulty breathing, teary eyes, dry nose and coughing have existed since the building became occupied in 1978.

When the HSC was completed in 1979, it was discovered that air quality problems existed.

An inoperable fan located at the roof of the building made the air quality unsatisfactory. Fresh air which should have been flowing throughout the building from the roof flowed through the next largest opening—the truck loading dock, located just beneath the School of Social Welfare. The air which was "vacuumed" into HSC contained carbon monoxide.

The fumes which came from diesel delivery trucks were discovered in 1978 when faculty and students complained of feeling ill. According to Oaks, while complaints amounted, faculty and staff of the school were moved to other vacant spaces in the HSC.

Although the air ventilation malfunction was discovered in 1978, it was not repaired. According to Oaks, it was believed the implementation of a new ventilation system would be too complex, cost too much money and take too much time. He also added that the contractors who built HSC were already involved in millions of dollars worth of lawsuits.

Instead of ripping down the inadequate ventilation system, it was decided it would be better "to patch things up," according to Oaks.

To remedy the problem in 1978, trucks unloading goods at Central Receiving were ordered to shut their engines. With engines off, it was believed that the air quality would improve and carbon monoxide related complaints decrease. Modifications were also made on heating and air-conditioning systems and there were attempts to increase the intake of fresh air, yet throughout the years complaints rose.

The problem, according to Oaks, was caused directly from the truck fumes and poor intake of fresh air. Oaks said "the air coming in from the loading dock comes from the worst place. It's a bad place to pick up air especially when you're loading trucks and piling up garbage. There have been times when the docks were stacked up one truck

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Dr. Howard Oaks, Vice-president of Health Sciences

photo by C. Goldsmith

Treasurer's Report Released

Well kids, Polity's treasurer, Lisa Miller, released the financial report for Polity's fiscal year September 1, 1986-August 31, 1987 at the Polity Council meeting Monday night. This report is a required part of the treasurer's job; it shows all the money taken in by Polity, and how that money was spent. Your money, your activity fee.

The first three pages of the fourteen page document describe "several issues that need to be brought to the attention of the students." The tastiest tidbits from this section are the descriptions of Fallfest's debt from 1985-86 of twenty-five grand, which had to be taken out of the '86-'87 budget, and SAB's overdraft from '85-'86 of a mere twenty grand, which was also taken out of the '86-'87 budget. As the report

states: "In both Activities and Concerts their /SAB's/ annual budget has been depleted in one semester. SAB management must learn to budget their funds more effectively and program accordingly. This necessitates a changing attitude in the scope of their programming." If the Fallfest '86 debt wasn't bad enough, Fallfest '87 lost \$63,787.53, due to "losses that arise from inclement weather." Also mentioned: the streamlining of the voucher process (the treasurer was relieved of the responsibility of handling club advertising requests and "a strict five day plan was implemented"); the suspension of operations of the Polity Hotline because of "mismanagement by Hotline staff" and "consistent abuse of Union policies"; a \$175 ceiling for any DJ hired

by any Polity-funded organization; and a \$500 ceiling for any college semi-formal (no portion of the \$500 may be used for alcohol).

According to the report, Polity's budget as a whole showed a \$19,507 surplus for the year, but where that surplus would be applied was not stated. SAB, as Ms. Miller points out in her report, is spending money very quickly. The report shows SAB's budget as \$97,000 for the year, yet only \$6555.57 is left as of December 31, 1987. Nearly every other club or organization (including the athletic clubs and NCAA teams) has spent money at a steady rate, leaving about half of their respective budgets left over for use during the Spring semester.

The report also highlights the fact that

the seating capacity for any event in the gym is limited to 1200 people due to ongoing renovations. The Tabler and Kelly Cafeterias have been opened up for event use; all requests for space must be made at the office of Student Union and Activities.

At the end of the report is another statement by Ms. Miller describing the infighting at Polity and stating that "only when students start putting the objectives of the organization before their personal agendas, i.e. egos, can Student Polity become a truly meaningful organization. Providing the elected and appointed student leaders the opportunity to meet the needs of their constituents is a near impossibility under the present mindset and operating standards."

February 4, 1988 page 3

Student Polity Association

—THE FOURTH ANNUAL—

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The Bugs Were Bugging Me Out

by Ryder Miller

Among the "Welcome homes" and "Happy New Years", I was greeted with when I came home this Christmas Vacation, was a greeting from a whole different kind of thing. In my family's apartment in Brooklyn, a population of flies had established themselves while I had been away at school. Black dots, which were flies, could be seen all over the off-white walls of our apartment.

My father would walk around with a towel, swinging it at the walls. He would look at me humorously and say, "Sometimes you hit, and sometimes you miss." My brother explained how the first bombing of the apartment didn't work. He had only used one bomb, and he was planning to use two bombs the next time. He explained how the two bombs would be overkill, whereas the one bomb wasn't enough to cover the whole area of the apartment.

The situation was annoying. On Christmas day I was awakened by flies walking over my face. In the bathroom and kitchen was disgusting looking orange fly paper with the dead trapped bodies of flies. My dad, a product of the fifties, who grew up during the depression has a definite generous streak, but had a real problem with these freeloaders. Nobody invited them anyway.



Musca domestica
HOUSE FLY

I tried to stall my brother from bombing the apartment, telling him that I studied ecology at school and I knew about these kinds of things. I told him that if he gave me a chance to do a little research on the biology of flies, that we could use the information so that next time he bombed the apartment we would get all of them. My brother found the situation humorous.

One day he came out of the bathroom with a towel around him, delayed from taking a shower for a minute. He hunched over, imitating a father figure, saying like an old man, "Welcome home son, we need your help. What did you study at school? Biology? Entomology?"



Ophyra spp.
DUMP FLIES

People who don't know population ecology can't appreciate the difficulty involved in pushing a population of small mobile organisms, like flies, into extinction. And that is what was needed to be done if we wanted to end the problem forever.

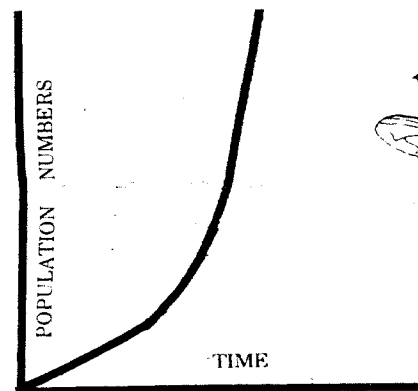
Populations of organisms, populations defined as a group of organisms of the same species which live in a confined or arbitrarily defined area, under optimal conditions, theoretically grow at exponential rates. Each member of the original population is replaced by r (the replacement rate) individuals in the succeeding generation, r squared by the second generation, r cubed by the third, etc.

Human populations rarely have replacement rate values (r) above 5, which would be ten children for a couple of two. Other organisms are known to produce significantly larger numbers of offspring. Some trees can produce a million seeds over their lifetimes. Certain stream fish can produce as many as 10,000 eggs each year. The housefly, *Musca domestica*, on average can produce 500 eggs per female, this paired with the fact that the whole life cycle from egg to adult can be completed from 6 to 20 days, and a new generation (the offspring of the adults) started in 2 to 20 days more, stresses the point I wished to make to my family, which was: if you don't get them all, they'll be coming back.

The majority of the offspring, sometimes as much as 99.9999% as in the tree example, fail to survive to reproduce. If all the offspring survived, the whole planet would be overrun with more organisms than can be supported. The planet and each region has its own natural carrying capacity, which is the number of organisms that can be supported by the resources available. When population numbers are lower than the carrying capacity of the region that the population is in, a larger percentage of the offspring can find the resources that they need to survive, be it either food, or nest sites, etc...

Under these conditions populations can take advantage of their full reproducible capabilities, and the populations quickly increase in number, sometimes at full exponential rates. When the population numbers get close to, or exceed the carrying capacity, increased mortality occurs and the population tends to level off at the carrying capacity.

If the bombs my brother wished to set off killed 98% of the flies in the apartment, there would still be 2% which have a giant apartment, with the resources which supported fifty times as many flies. The offspring of these flies would have a very good chance to grow to reproductive ages, and the apartment would be full of flies again within the month.



Graph Illustrating Exponential Population Growth



Fannia spp.
LESSER HOUSE FLIES

The bombings were planned for the week-end after Christmas, but were delayed because we had no place to put our cat. I went to the super to see if we could keep the cat in one of the empty apartments in the building when we bombed our apartment. He was home, but the super's wife answered no when I asked and she continued in broken english, english being not her native tongue, "No, no can't do that. Nobody else has fly problem. No flies ever before, it's because of the cat." I subconsciously denied this, hugging my cat closer.

What eventually happened was my brother dropped the bombs and brought the cat down with him to the laundry room. When I came home that evening, I breathed deeply and felt the poison burn the back of my nostrils. After the bombing there were still flies left, but they were weak from the poison and easy to kill. At the end of the vacation there were still flies left, but for the time being the numbers were low.

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Cochliomyia macellaria
SECONDARY
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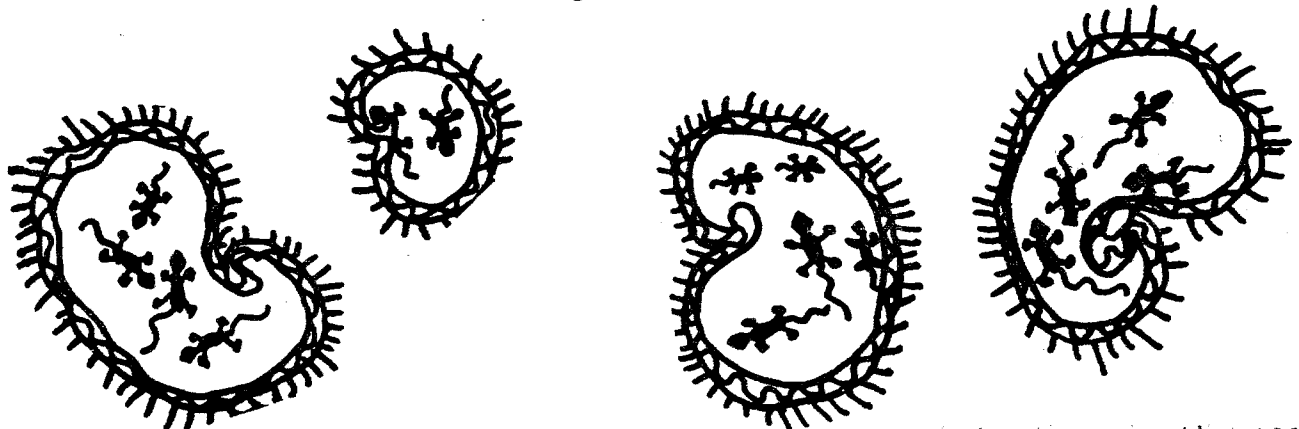
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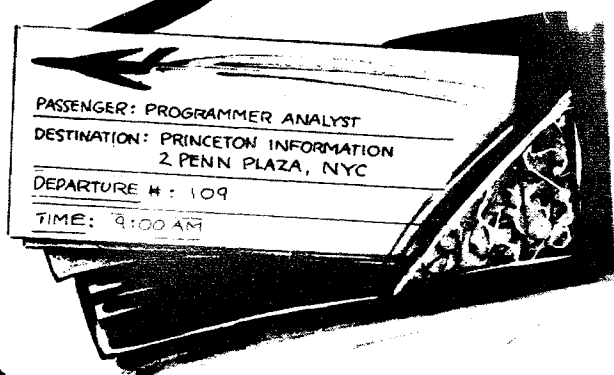


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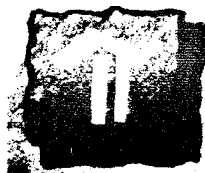
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You Have No Choice

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(by increasing the policy holder pool of the present university health insurance) and ensuring that all health-related bills never become delinquent.

Esther Latique of SASU explains that the advocacy organization's objections to the proposal were based on concerns that the mandatory nature of the fee would set a disastrous precedent, opening the door for similar tuition bill tariffs (SASU has consistently fought against fees of this kind). She also expressed doubt that the benefits of the plan

would extend beyond the minority of students who reside on campus. Few commuters, she implied, would come to campus strictly to receive medical attention.

The proposal now rests in the bureaucratic machine at SUNY Central in Albany. It has been endorsed by President Marburger and only awaits final approval before it can be implemented here. At UHS, hopes are that the plan will be in action by late February or early March, but nothing can happen until positive word—from SUNY system chancellors—arrives.

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Jesse Jackson

by Robert V Gilheany

At a time when most civil rights leaders are calling for an end to racial violence, Presidential Candidate Jesse Jackson is calling for an end to *economic* violence: he requests pregnancy leave for women, a raise in the minimum wage, and ends to the "Contra-Cocaine Pipeline", and subsidies for large corporations competing against small farms. Jackson spoke at the Martin Luther King Civic Center in Manhattan, Monday, January 25: the event was organized by New York Students for Jesse Jackson and NYC Health Care Workers Local 1199.

Jackson railed against federal farm subsidies that help large corporations dominate agriculture at the expense of small farmers. He noted the Kargill Corporation as an example, stating that not only is it subsidized to compete with family farmers, but that it exploits cheap labor from Central America, thus enabling it to undersell American family farmers. Further, Jackson pointed out that there have been over 600,000 farm foreclosures in the last seven years.

Jackson also called for a raise in the minimum wage: "Poor people don't need motivation, they need to get paid for the work they do." The full time minimum wage, he said, is below the poverty line (*Fairshare, not welfare*, is Jackson's rallying cry). He also stressed the parallel importance of pregnancy leave for women.

Fighting crime with education is also a goal ("Invest in schools not jails"). Jackson points out that a year at Harvard costs \$30,000 while one year at a correctional facility is \$160,000. He wants to go after the root causes of crime: poverty, lack of quality education, and drugs. This approach is not only good for human dignity and growth, but less costly than the alternatives.

Jesse Jackson condemned the Reagan administration's "Contra-Cocaine Pipeline" also. According to the Christie Institute lawsuit, cocaine has been flown from millionaire



drawing by Sanford Lee

Jesse Jackson at a NYC student rally on January 25

rancher John Hull's ranch in northern Costa Rica, on the border of Nicaragua, to cities in the US and sold to raise money for contra weapons. Jackson blasted the hypocrisy of Reagan's fight against drug abuse. Fighting, given as an example, the \$100 million cut in the budget of the Coast Guard (the first line of defense against cocaine smuggling)—the same amount he gave to the contras. Reinvestment in America is Jackson's goal: retrain, reindustrialize, and put resources into human priorities. America, Jackson said,

"should export grain, tractors, and human understanding, not drugs and terror."

Jackson talked about the poorest county in America, McAllen, Texas, a county where minimum wage laws, child labor laws and work safety and health codes are not enforced. "Do these people have their civil rights?" he asked, contrasting his projected administration's intent to enforce the laws that protect the poor, the common people, and the environment.

What Will Be Will Always Be

by Socrates Gianis Jr.

The intuition of this story is spurred on by pure inspiration. Let me first lay down a presupposition. If it is possible to conceive of anything outside our "relative" understanding of the world, it would be the work of the powers of the imagination.

Alichí is a man with a vision. He is also a man with a spirit. But he has a problem, for he lives in a confused world, and unbeknownst to him, this confusion has meddled with his mind, heart, and soul. But Alichí remains a gentle, sincere

man who simply considers his life his own: something which most certainly is lived the way he chooses. Beyond the ordinary affairs that his life pushes him to attend, he spends much of his time struggling with his creative powers in order to bring about his vision. What his vision is nobody knows for sure, but a few close acquaintances say it has something to do with beauty and the beautiful.

On a day just like every other day, Alichí rose to be greeted by his confidant:

"I slept like a rolling log."

"Well, that's nothing to complain about. It could have been a dreadful nightmare."

"No, I'm not complaining, it was great sleep. I just stayed up late watching the boob-tube and good coffee was poured and the "eye-opener" cigarette was smoked."

"You know what I dreamt about last night?"

"What?"

"I dreamed that this evil villain had stolen my tongue and I couldn't speak, so I had to go through life speaking with my hands..."

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Carbon Monoxide

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after another." The former ventilation system had an inability to intake fresh air and subsequently substituted diesel fumes which contain carbon monoxide and Oaks said. "The little air HSC received was not helped by diesel fumes." Although the ven-

tilation system was "patched up" in 1978 due to surmounting complaints, it was decided that a new ventilation system will be constructed.

On October 22nd, 1987, two faculty members from the School of Social Welfare were admitted to the emergency room. According to Oaks, "There were fainting and revivals. Nothing serious or permanent seemed to be wrong." In response to the illnesses, and in the aftermath of the Javits Lecture Center toxic fume ordeal, faculty and student rallies were held.

Angel Campos, former acting dean of the school, led one rally and proposed measures to be undertaken by the University. Campos proposed that the HSC school's 40 faculty, staff and 300 students relocate immediately. In compliance, the faculty and parts of the

school were moved to Nassau and Dutchess Hall, located at South Campus. According to Oaks, classes are conducted in these buildings and will continue to be until the installation of a new fan and air ducts is completed by the summer of '88. The installation and instruments will cost \$75,000. Oaks said, "The new powerful fan and ducts will provide significant fresh air and will hopefully cure the fume and inadequate air problems." Once the new system is constructed, Oaks added, "There'll be all sorts of tests to make sure the system is functioning properly."

Another of Campos's measures proposed that the University hire an independent testing lab to test the quality of air. Clayton Associates took special air tests on January 1st, 1988. The results of these tests will not be available to the public until the end of

February.

Suggestions for improving HSC conditions were also made by Clayton Associates. The laboratory group verbally suggested that the department comply with Campos's proposal to seal off the opening of Central Receiving and completely move the loading dock to another location, said Oaks.

In compliance with Clayton Lab's suggestion, Central Receiving, which receives all Stony Brook deliveries except food, will be moved to a new building located beyond the Physics and Gym buildings. This move will not be completed until the end of spring, and according to Oaks, "Everything in the HSC should be back to normal by the fall '88 semester."

STUDENT POLITY ASSOCIATION

presents

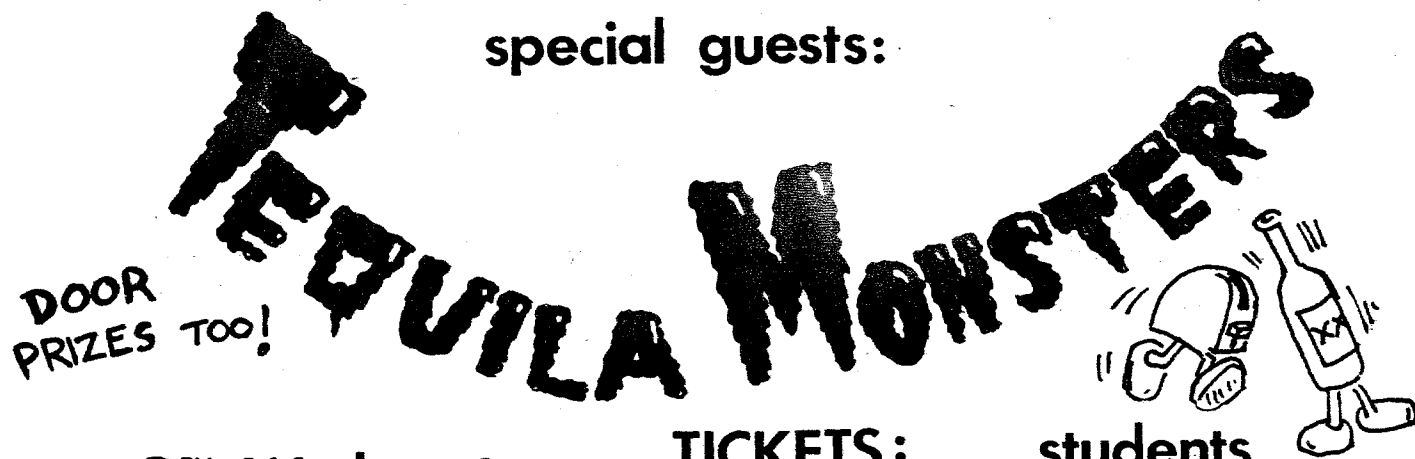
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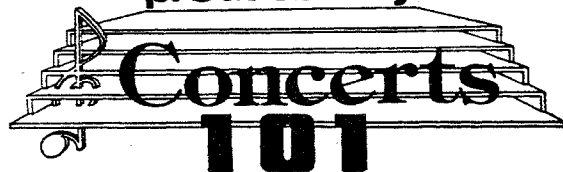
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THE MAHABHARATA AT THE B.A.M.

continued from back page

fault of the cast (or perhaps the language coach, Clifford De Spenser) is that some of the players' accents were so thick that their lines were occasionally become muddled, making the dialogue difficult to follow, but that is perhaps a complaint born of English language arrogance. **The Mahabharata** is so large in scale, if nothing else, that Brook has again proven himself as a director of difficult theater.

It is hard, though, to overlook the spectacle of **The Mahabharata**. It encompasses the origin of man and the fate of the world. Battle fills the stage with the hail of arrows and the clash of swords, doom hangs heavy in the air—there will be no victor, no vanquished. Rings of fire and river through the desert, on stage! Simply amazing, but such dramatic pyrotechnics tend to obscure the cold, Agatha Christie neatness of the plot twists and two full hours of foreshadowing that open the play.

When the script waxes philosophical, inquiring into the dark spots of the soul, it fails to illuminate. At worst, however, it covers old ground well. This was an issue of hot debate during the two intermissions (over great bacon cheeseburgers at a diner on Flatbush Avenue): whether or not the play, as sensually and intellectually pleasing as it was, touched you. The audience is perhaps isolated from the humanity of the characters: destiny in the play is so inevitable, the characters so blatantly self-destructive, that it is hard to feel either sympathy for the losers or satisfaction for the victors (nearly every human character dies, some just manage to die a bit

wiser). The play lacks the pathos of Shakespeare, to which it aspires, and the profound sense of loss in Philip Glass' operas, to which it is compared. The comparison to Philip

by the BAM itself. **The Mahabharata** is more entertaining, and easier, than Glass' operas, but it is a completely different type of production. The strong sense of experiment-

length, courtesy of Jean-Paul Carriere).

It is difficult, though, to write about **The Mahabharata** because it was so good. Expectation demanded, however, that it be better—the cutting edge, the "Next Wave", and all the other buzzwords that have been thrown around by the press since August. Avant-garde-as-institution cannot work—an institution cannot take as many (if any) chances. It's a snowball effect. A good reputation for serious theater brings in the sponsors (Philip Morris Companies Inc., AT&T, and Coca-Cola Co. among others), but even a small failure and you can kiss the non-profit, tax-deductible money goodbye. The BAM, which will surely continue to bring high-quality theater to the public, may have outlived its role as a forum for experimentation, for risk. Remember **Saturday Night Live** when it was good, and fresh? By 1980 the show was still funny, but it was comfortable, settled. Such an atmosphere does not lend itself to producing innovative work. As I said before, **The Mahabharata** was not a new play; the BAM did not have a major influence on the style and technique of the production. That style had already been thought out and refined years earlier, on another continent.

I'd like to tell everybody to go see **The Mahabharata**; it is well worth the time and energy. But even had this issue of **The Press** been printed before the closing performance, how any student can afford a \$98 theater ticket is beyond me. Although not intended to be so, **The Mahabharata** was a play strictly for those who are financially at ease, or desperate enough to hock their guitars. And that **The Mahabharata** ain't worth.

THE MAHABHARATA

The Mahabharata is the longest book in the world. It contains nearly twelve thousand pages (about fifteen times as many as the *Bible*). It is also one of the world's oldest books. Written in Sanskrit, it is the very basis of the myths, the religion, the history and thought of India.

The Mahabharata remains to this day the very basis of cultural life in India and Indonesia. Numerous episodes have been acted, danced, sung or filmed. Jean-Paul Carriere's play is the first time, however, that a complete dramatic adaptation has been attempted.

Maha in Sanskrit means "great". A **Maharajah** is a great king. **Bharata** is the name of a family or clan. The title may therefore be understood simply as "The great history of the Bharata". But it must be added that **Bharata**, by derivation, signifies "Hindu", and even more generally, "Man". The subject matter could be said to be "Great History of Mankind".

In fact, this "great poem of the world" narrates the violent quarrel between two groups of cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. This family quarrel arises from the question of who should rule the world,

and it culminates in an enormous battle which decides the fate of the whole universe.

The first act, *The Game of Dice*, recounts the origins of the protagonists, the birth and childhood of the heroes, the first acts of aggression and the unequal sharing of the kingdom. It ends with famous game of dice during the course of which the fate of the kingdom is decided.

The second act, *Exile in the Forest*, shows the years of obscurity, the inevitable approach of destruction and how both sides acquire weapons of absolute devastation. It also shows a world of disguises and deceptions and the sometimes prodigious efforts made by wise men to keep the peace. But everything portends the end of the world.

It is in the third act, *The War*, that the *Bhagavad Gita*, the "Song of Bliss", takes place. It is Krishna's own reply to one of the protagonists before the commencement of battle. Following this, the heroes die, one after the other, during the course of extraordinary events, and the conquerors remain alone in an almost empty world. After the war, a happy reign of thirty-six years precedes the ascent to paradise, the "inconceivable region".

Glass (*Ikhnoton*, *Einstein on the Beach*, and *Ghandi* in particular) is ill-founded, and one that has been made by some critics and

ation, of being on new ground, is missing. **The Mahabharata** had to be successful, it doesn't take too many chances (except its

••WUSB 90.1FM•••••

TOP 35 ARTISTS OF THE WEEK

1. Firehouse—"If n"
2. Robyn Hitchcock—Globe of Frogs
3. Xymox—Untitled (import)
4. Cindy Lee Berry Hill—Whose Gonna Save the World?
5. Ghetto Blaster—People
6. Miriam Makeba—Sangoma
7. Steve Lacy—Momentum
8. Kingston 14—Wailing Souls
9. Sisters of Mercy—Floodland
10. Jonathan Richmond and the Modern Lovers—Modern Lovers '88
11. House of Freaks—Monkey on a Chain Gang
12. Scruffy the Cat—Boom Boom Boom Bingo
13. Great Plains—Sum Things Up
14. John Kruth—Midnight Smack
15. Negativland—Negativland
16. Camper Van Beethoven—The Vampire Can Dance
17. Camper Van Chadbourne—Camper Van Chadbourne
18. Idjah Hadijah—Tangeret
19. HR—Human Rights
20. NRBO—God Bless Us All
21. Live Skull—Dusted
22. Eurythmics—Savage
23. Jello Biafra—No More Cocoons
24. Various Artists—No Age
25. Severed Heads—Bad Moon Guys
26. World Saxophone Quartet—Dances and Ballads
27. The Shamen—Drop
28. Alternatives—Hold Your Tongue
29. Various Artists—Dances of the World
30. The Godfathers—Birth, School, Work, Death (12" Thatcher mix)



31. Mose Allison—Ever Since the World Ended
32. The Swans—Children of God
33. Richard Barone
34. Breaking Circus—Smokers Paradise
35. Seven Seconds—One Plus One

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February 9th—James Blood Ulmer and Tom Cora

by C J Morgan

ee I can't stand people, I hate them...don't you?" Faye Dunaway asked. "No, but I seem to feel better when they're not around," Mickey Rourke replied.

Barfly, a relatively unpublicized film by Barbet Schroeder was released on Long Island in November and closed a week later, was simply superb—great, wonderful, fantastic, and all other Eggbert and Cystkill adjectives. Based on the semi-autobiographical novel by Charles Bukowski (who also wrote the screenplay), **Barfly** is the story of the perfect bum-alcoholic. Perfect because he does it so well. Because he sets his own rules and codes (as twisted as they may be) and strictly abides by them. And Henry Chinaski (Mickey Rourke) can **drink**. An average night consists of endless rounds of beer and shots at *The Golden Horn* followed by two bottles of cheap bourbon at home. Faye Dunaway, who hasn't been in a decent film since **The Turning Point**, is perfectly cast as the fallen angel Wanda Wilcox, who falls in love with Rourke. She's one of the few people in the movie who can match Rourke drink for drink, insult for insult, punch for kick, betrayal for betrayal, odor for odor.

The thing about Henry Chinaski (like his creator Bukowski) is that he can write. Without warning in the middle of a midnight stupor, he'll stumble over to his note pad and scribble furiously—anything, thoughts, poems, short stories. And his writing sells. What makes his character so great is that he doesn't give a fuck about the establishment literary world he sells to or about the rich and beautiful young editor of a magazine that bears more than slight resemblance to the **New Yorker**. "You live in a cage with golden bars," he tells her. While they drive in the editor's Mercedes convertible she tries feebly to explain that upper-class people have problems too, that rich people are worth writing about. "There's nothing interesting about rich people," he replies. "There ain't nothing like being poor, nothing." The editor, who is seduced and then thrown away by Rourke, is nothing in comparison to Dunaway, who is vibrant, bitchy and beautiful

in the way that only a loser can be. Dunaway has no problem with contradictions, telling Rourke: "If you leave me alone, even for a minute, and a man came through that door with a fifth in his hand, I'd go with him. That's what I live for—the alcohol," and then later beating the shit out of Chinaski's editor in a bar because "that little slut" slept with Rourke.

Every detail in the film is treated with the utmost care. From the seedy look of Rourke's neighborhood (**Barfly** was filmed in LA) to the denizens of the fourth-rate dives that Dunaway and Rourke frequent to the casting

BARFLY—

Bums, Booze & Broads



of Frank Stallone (yes, Sly's brother) as the obnoxious, pin-headed bartender at *The Golden Horn*, Schroeder has created a film that shines out among the many yawners that were produced in 1987. It's a shame that a movie that is so good hardly played on Long Island long enough for anybody to even hear that it *was* good. Although the production notes and release dates that were sent to the **Press** two weeks before the film's November release viciously whetted my appetite. I thought that I would have more than a week to go see the film. Fortunately the New Com-

munity Cinema in Huntington showed it during the first week of classes—the Cinema is one of the true havens of quality cinema left on Long Island (where a movie that isn't a "BLOCKBUSTER!" is pulled faster than a speeding strip of celluloid).

If you get a chance, go see **Barfly** in any form—videotape, cable, 99¢ theatres, or COCA (hint, hint). It contains what is easily Rourke's best performance since **Rumblefish**, and with it Dunaway has finally reclaimed her position as one of the finest actresses in the country.

The Toasters

continued from back page

Law at the Ritz, and they wrote it into their contract that they wanted us to play with them.

Press: Wow!

Toasters: Yeah, it was like a nice Christmas present. It was a really interesting show because I think it was the first time anybody had hooked up ska with hardcore.

Press: It made a really nice mixture.

Toasters: It really did. I think it should be further explored because the hardcore scene is on its way out, like it or not, and a lot of the kids find that ska is a good cross over for them; it's loud and fast and they can go to ska concerts and slam, what's the diff, you know?

Press: What do you think that the attraction to ska music is, from both a fan's perspective and a band's perspective?

Toasters: It's a lot of fun. The whole thing about ska is not so much the music, but the attitude that goes behind it: that it's not like "Glamrock" posing-ass bullshit rockers with blow-dried hair and all that crap. I mean there's so much of that image in these unattainable, god-like rockstars: that's all bullshit. What's good about ska music is that everyone is just one of the "boys". You just come out, booze it up, have a good time, and do what you want. You can dance, it's fun, the lyrics are humorous, and you can get away from the whole rock establishment, where you're supposed to be on video and posing and everyone is alienated cause they see all these images as something they can never really be. Ska is a lot more immediate than all that garbage, that's why I like it.

Press: Do you see a time when ska will really breakthrough to the mainstream?

Toasters: If a record company gets behind it. Anything can make a breakthrough to the mainstream if the record companies say: "This is what you kids are gonna buy." It's just a matter of someone backing it cause he thinks he'll get a lot of money out of it.

Press: Let's move onto the band now, when and how did you guys first get together?

Toasters: In its present format, we've been together for about two years, but there's been some semblance of the Toasters running around New York for the past five years. I came here from England on a business trip and ended up staying. I met the others because people in New York with similar interests gravitate towards each other, like magnetism. That's one of the only things I like about this place: You meet the people that you need to meet, you also meet a lot of people you don't need to meet.

Press: What were your main influences? The obvious parallel is between the Toasters and the British ska bands of the two-tone era like Madness, The Specials and The English Beat.

Toasters: That's obviously big because that's the whole frame of reference that everybody has here; ska music for most Americans was The Specials and Madness, but there was actually life before death.

Press: Does the music scene in Jamaica influence you?

Toasters: Yeah, we listen to a lot of Prince Buster, the early Wailers stuff is pretty crucial, The Skatalites, Jazz, a great band called the Equators who nobody has really heard of: there's a lot of stuff out there that has yet to be discovered. Plus a lot of guys in the band have an R & B background, for example, the sax player used to play with Gene Vincent.

Press: What do you think of ska groups like The English Beat and The Specials who have gained popularity by mutating into the "new wave" bands known as General Public and The Colourfield (respectively)?

Toasters: Well, everything is in a constant state of change; that's just the way it is in this world. If things don't change, they get boring. I mean, would you like The English Beat if they did 30 albums that all sounded the same? I think not, that's what makes those (English Beat) albums gems.

Press: Let's talk about your albums. You've released two records: one EP in 1983 and a full album this past summer. What were the recording sessions like?

Toasters: They were very spontaneous; we cut our first record in about 24 hours and our second album in 30. It was an attempt to capture the "electricity" of our live show.

Press: Were they self-produced?

Toasters: Our first record was produced by Joe Jackson, under the alias of Stanley Turpentine, he also plays on it. Our

second record was self-produced.

Press: How did you meet Joe Jackson?

Toasters: I knew him from England, and when he heard I was forming this band in New York, he came around and offered to help out. If you're lucky, you might catch him at one of our shows: he occasionally sits in with the band and plays keyboards.

Press: What can one expect to see at a Toasters concert?

Toasters: You can expect to see a bunch of drunken guys on stage (laughs). I guess if I were to describe us on stage, in one word, it would be "frenetic" or maybe "energetic"...something like that.

Press: What's your impression of MTV?

Toasters: MTV...I don't watch it. It's just women with big tits and Lambourginis. Watching MTV is like watching that cartoon: He-Man. You watch He-Man and a commercial comes on pushing He-Man toys. You watch MTV and a commercial comes on pushing whatever garbage they play on MTV...it's the same type of brainwashing.

Press: What would a Toasters video look like?

Toasters: Well it wouldn't be like anything they've got now (on MTV), it would be different. A Toasters video would probably be a bunch of old drunken guys getting thrown out of bars.

Press: What's your impression of Top 40 radio?

Toasters: Top 40 radio (laughs). I love those DJs. They just come on the air and they're like: "Blah blah blah blah", they don't know what they're saying. They read these disaster stories with smiles on their faces. And the music they play; it doesn't have to be good, it doesn't have to be anything, it's just there. But I forgive them because they don't know what they're doing.

Press: Would you like to see the day when the Toasters have a Top 40 hit?

Toasters: Of course! Then I could sit on a beach, like Robert Palmer, surrounded by women with big tits and Lambourginis.

Press: What are the Toasters' plans for the future?

Toasters: To stay out of trouble, mainly.

Note: The Toasters will be appearing in the Union Ballroom on Wednesday February 10th at 9:00 PM with special guests The Tequila Monsters.

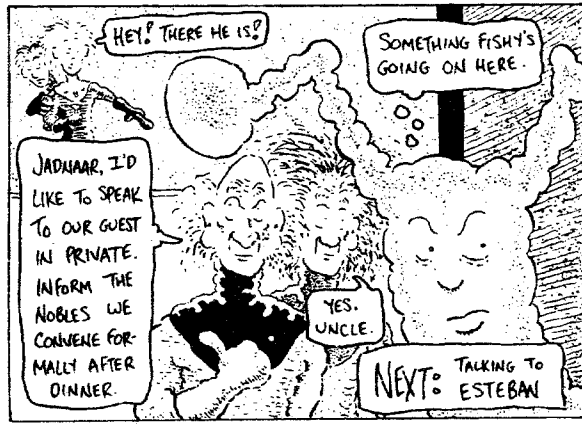
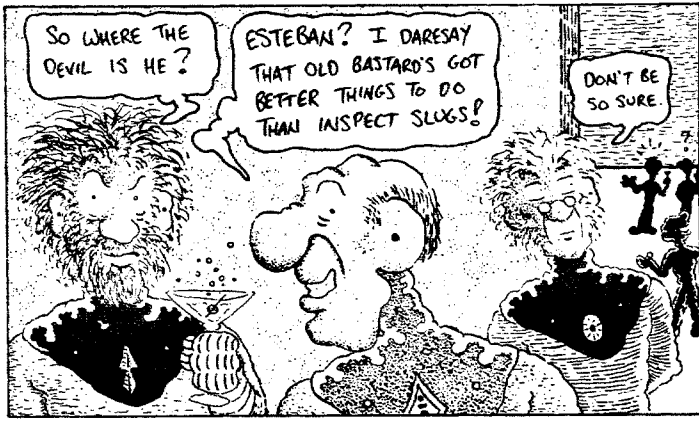
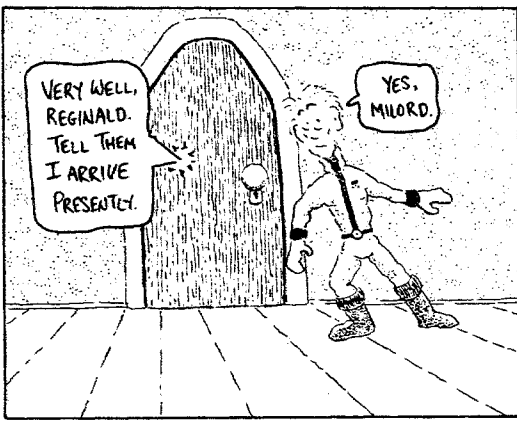
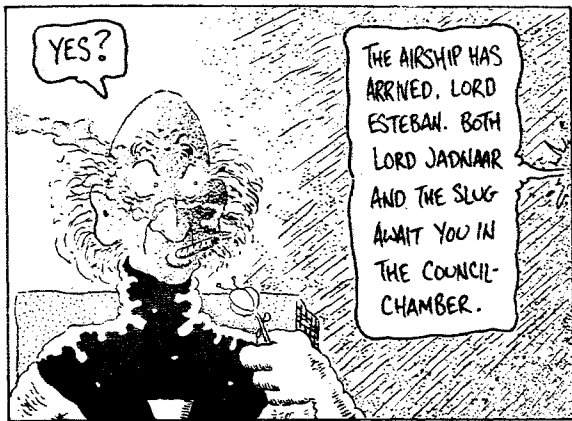
Tales of the Slug

BY KYLE SILFER

OUR STORY THUS FAR

LORD JADNAAR EL-HAZIM (RULER OF THE UNDERGROUND KINGDOM KNOWN AS NOD) HAS SOUGHT THE AID OF ONE "EDUARDO THE SLUG" TO RID HIS LAND OF A CATASTROPHIC PLAGUE.

THIS CREATURE, ONCE A MIGHTY HUMAN WIZARD, HAS, IN TURN, AGREED TO EMPLOY HIS SORCEROUS ARTS FOR A SUBSTANTIAL FEE, SO. THE BARGAIN STRUCK, THE PAIR JOURNEYED EVEN NOW TO ZONGIS (NOD'S CAPITAL) WHERE BROODS THE ENIGMATIC LORD ESTEBAN, AWAITING THEIR IMMINENT ARRIVAL.

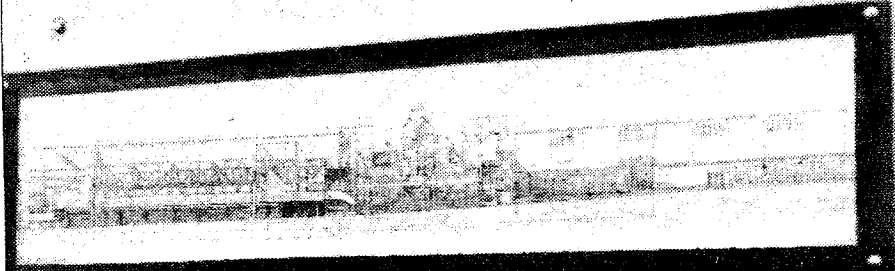


Happy Family



Y

The New Gym



Field House

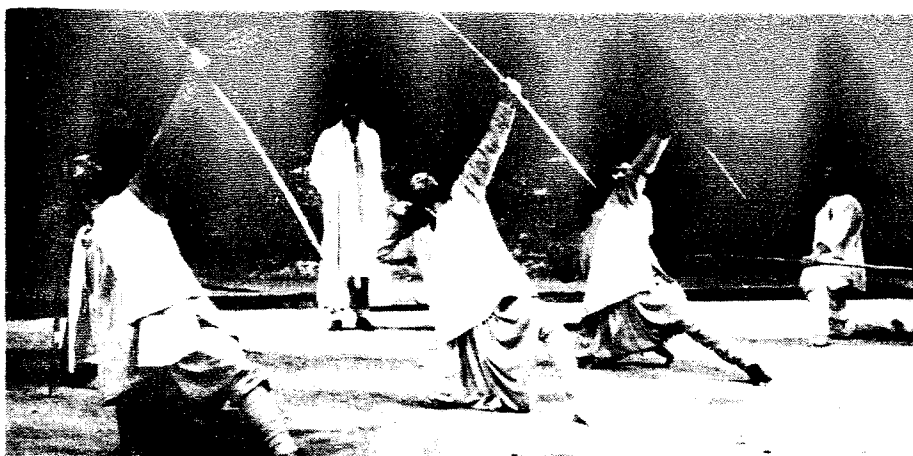


THE MAHABHARATA

by R. Sienna

The annual Next Wave Festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music has finally become an institution bent on upholding its reputation for presenting innovative, progressive theater. The Festival is trying to maintain the prestige and flavor of risk that it held when the BAM presented long, avant-garde works in the early eighties by a then unheralded Philip Glass. The feature of the 1987 Next Wave Festival, **The Mahabharata**, although excellent in all respects, was neither untested nor distinguishably avant-garde.

The *loooong*, highly detailed play premiered at the Avignon Festival in the summer of 1985. At the time it was perhaps on, or at least near, the cutting edge of modern drama, but by the time director Peter Brook brought his English language adaptation (from the French script penned by Jean-Paul Carriere) to the States, **The Mahabharata** had proven itself. It was known fact that an audience's attention could be captured for the nine plus hours that it takes to present the play. It was known fact that the dramatic elements of the original Indian document, nearly twelve thousand pages of ancient Sanskrit, worked on stage. With a little bit of the self-assurance and momentum that accompanies an already successful play, the BAM was not hard put to devote so much time, money, space, and advance publicity to the play's American premiere. The BAM also had no problem charging upwards of \$98 a seat, putting **The Mahabharata** completely out of range of many people who were eager to see it (I was lucky:



Archers take aim during **THE MAHABHARATA**

the tickets were a birthday present).

I caught the play in late December, near the end of its run at the BAM's Majestic Theater; the international cast was completely at ease, confident with their roles and performances. And the performances were extraordinary. Brook has brought a long, involved play, replete with staging that includes a small stream and pond set amidst sand, sand, and more sand, to the stage. The play's length and intricacy which could and did cause a great deal of apprehension, was not a great drain as it could have been.

The Mahabharata chronicles the doom and destiny of two related Indian clans. Chock full of invincible yet doomed warriors, divinely fathered children, prophets and preachers, and demi-gods and avatars such as Krishna, the play kicks off with a depiction of the origin of the family of the

Bharatas, from whom all Indians are descended. The play climaxes a mere four generations, three acts, and nine hours later with the incredibly visual, dance-like battle between the two warring bands of brothers.

Most of the metaphysical aspects of the book are missing; the play concentrates on the drama and story of the original. Good drama—the characters are extremely powerful, intelligent figures, all flawed somehow. Some make vows to the gods early in the play which give them invincible powers, some are in the grips of overwhelming vice, some just have no common sense. It is inevitable that the vices will get the best of them, or that they will at some point break their vows and be punished for it. Krishna floats through occasionally, offering advice and obscure glimpses of the future.

All this takes place with a minimum of staging—bamboo screens are sometimes arranged to effect walls or battlements or the shields of phalanxes—and the constant accompaniment of music. The “band”, an assemblage of sitar, tabla, flute, and percussion players, under the direction of the brilliant Japanese musician Toshi Tsuchitori, is a character in itself. Playing anything from soft rambling *ragas* to thundering tribal war rhythms, the musicians provide both atmosphere and commentary to the play.

It is at times almost a dance—during battle scenes the archers and swordsmen move fluidly from position to position. The choreography has echoes of *Yoga*, or *Tai Chi*. Smoke, candles and torches, rings of fire, flowing water, and the music all make **The Mahabharata** a highly visual, aural, and dramatic experience. The play has an aesthetic cohesiveness that, although not new in conception or form, is technical perfection. Brook's direction is superb, his taste and sensibility exuberant and controlled. The attention to detail is astounding, but not overwhelming. From the hails of arrow shafts during battle to the elephantine mask of the divine scribe, nothing is present that does not contribute to the play, and nothing is missing or missed.

The international cast that Brook has assembled (France, Japan, Canada, India, Great Britain, America, Turkey, Switzerland, Poland, Senegal, Germany, Trinidad, Iran, Viet Nam, South Africa, Guinea, Bali, and Denmark) brings with it a great deal of talent and diversity of background. The only

continued on page 9

—Limelight—

Mud in Your Eye—THE TOASTERS

In recent years, American groups such as Fishbone, Urban Blight, and The Toasters have been reviving the music of the British ska craze that went on in the early 80s. Groups such as Madness, The English Beat, The Specials and Selecter were among the first to bring the rhythms of early Jamaican dance music to the mainstream popular conscience. In New York City alone, dozens of groups pack clubs such as The Ritz and the Catclub with anxious young teens ready to stomp and party to some of the world's best dance music. One of the bands at the forefront of this movement is the Toasters, labelled “NYC's ± 1 ska band” by **Rockpool Magazine**. The following interview with Rob Hingley, leader, and founding member of the Toasters, was done shortly after the Toasters had completed a successful tour of the west coast.

Press: Is ska music making a comeback?

Toasters: Well, it's enjoying a little bit more popular attention, put it that way. It's always been a big thing to me, and in England, but for the first time, it's actually getting the attention of the American mainstream.

Press: Is it a phenomenon isolated in New York, or is it happening elsewhere in the US?

Toasters: It used to be, but now it's like a big thing on the west coast, and we're hearing a lot from bands around the country. It seems that whenever we go out of town and play, there's always some kind of fledgling ska band popping up saying: “Yeah, we play ska too” in, you know, butt-fuck Illinois, or someplace like that.

Press: How would you describe ska music to someone who's never heard it?

Toasters: It's hard to say exactly, but it's mainly a fusion of jazz horns, calypso drums, and R & B guitar style all together. Add a couple pints of white rum, shake well: ska music!

Press: There seems to be a sort of comradeship among the NYC ska groups; for instance, you mention “second step” in one of your songs, and you've worn Urban Blight t-shirts during your concerts. How did that comradeship develop? Is it only because you play the same type of music?

Toasters: I guess so, we all like each other, so there's no sense in competing against each other. One of the points that we put forward on the “NY Beat” album that we did last year was that you can get a lot further down the road, working together, rather than competing.



Press: When **Rockpool Magazine** dubbed you “New York City's Number One Ska Band”, did that create a lot of tension?

Toasters: Well not with us, but it all depends on how you want to observe that. In a sense, I guess we have the biggest crowd right now, and a record that did rather well; whether or not that makes us “New York's Number One Ska Band”, I don't know, but it's just a meaningless tag that may, or may not be true. We've also been called “New York's Number One Drunken Band” and that is true!

Press: When you guys played with Murphy's Law and Fishbone at the Ritz, you mentioned that Fishbone got you on the bill. Tell us what happened, and how you met Fishbone.

Toasters: We went to see them the first time they got to town, when nobody knew who they were. There was about twelve of them sleeping in this one tiny van that smelled like the inside of Fulton St Fish Market, so I let them come to my house and shower, a couple of them stayed over, and we've been friendly ever since. They had this show with Murphy's

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