Judy Jarvis Modern Dance: nifty

By LORNA PITCHER

I had serious doubts that Fredericton was ready for Ms. Jarvis and company. Judging from the local paper's review, and the shocked expressions of two matron-patrons behind me, some people were not. Nonetheless, the Playhouse was full to capacity last Friday night to see the Judy Jarvis Dance and Theatre Company, and those who had even the vaguest notion what was going on were treated to an excellent performance

Modern dance is really just a series of significant movements conveying a theme. Ms. Jarvis and her partner Larry McCullough presented earthy, universal themes such as "Sun", "Open Spaces", and "Clouds". Odd music, bells, and sometimes discordant sounds were their accompaniment. Quite often the "music" was reptitious-driving on and on like the natural elements the dancers portrayed. To take the dance "Earth Move" as an example, Jarvis and McCullough conveyed the endless pattern of man and woman - flirtation, to union to cooperation, to exhaustion and impotence - accompanies by the monotonous pounding of a diesel pump. The best received dances were "Bird", and "Water". "Water" is an ingenious portrayal of the drowning death of Ophelia. In a blue body stocking with a blue cape around her neck and body, and bathed in blue and yellow light, Ms. Jarvis actually "goes underwater" three times. When she at last stops her feeble dogpaddle her long hair hangs, waving slowly, her eyes open, and she seems to float in her river of blue light. "Bird" was a last minute addition to the program. A humourous, queer little dance in which Jarvis is a fledgling robin , jerking and squawking in its first flight attempt. Jarvis's incredible body control held the audience captive as they all laughed at the struggling bird.

The most innovative performance was "Clouds". (The opening movement of this dance was pictured in last week's Brunswickan). Jarvis and McCullough, swathed in black and perched on black draped boxes, portrayed two thunder clouds alternately storming, thundering, and lapping up water. Although most of the audience was surprised or puzzled at first, they soon caught on to the theme and gave this performance a special round of applause.

Ms. Jarvis is not a beautiful woman, but is striking, with a litheness which is a little more than one would expect, even of a professional dancer. Her expressive face and stamina helped her as she performed nine dances almost back to back, yet seeming to be a different character each time.

She and her partner Larry McCullough perform well together and are obviously very accustomed to each other's moves.

Two of her students accompanied her in the opening dance, but seemed to constantly look to Ms. Jarvis for direction. She and McCullough, however, could synchronize their movements without looking at each other.

Most of the audience truly enjoyed this concert of contemporary dance, and brought the company back after several minutes of applause for an ovation well-deserved.



BILL OF FARE

KINGSWOOD LAMB CURRY

1 LARGE ONION
1 TBSP. BUTTER
1 TBSP. FLOUR
1 TBSP. CURRY POWDER
1 ½ TBSP. SUGAR
1 TSP. SALT
1 CUP RAISINS
3 CUPS — COLD COOKED LAMB SLICED OR CUBED
½ APPLE CUT INTO 8THS
1 BANANA SLICED

PREPARATION

BROWN ONION-CUT FINE, IN BUTTER. MIX FLOUR, SALT, SUGAR, AND CURRY POWDER. ADD TO BUTTER AND ONIONS. TO THIS ADD 1 PT. HOT WATER OR STOCK COOK SLOWLY. STIR CONSTANTLY UNTIL THICKENED. ADD RAISINS. SAUCE MAY BE PREPARED AHEAD FOR ENRICHED FLAVOR MARINADE 1 - 2 HRS. WHEN READY TO SERVE ADD COLD LAMB, APPLE AND BANANA. BRING TO BRISK BOIL.

TO SERVE

ARRANGE A RING OF BOILED RICE ON HOT PLATTER AND POUR CURRIED LAMB INTO CENTER. (FRUITS MAY BE VARIED. PEARS AND PEACHES ARE TASTY TOO!)

BY A.M. KORNER JR.



J.C. superstar

By DANIELLE THIBEAULT

It could have been another Cecil B. DeMille production, with a cast of thousands of mostly non-descript, lifeless characters evolving around an imposing but bland Jesus figure betrayed by a sleazy-looking Judas with an unsatiable thirst for money and revenge. Instead, Norman Jewison (director - screenwriter) presented us with a moving and realistic version of the last days of the man who was to forfeit his life for the redemption of the human race.

The plot is presented to us in quite an unusual way: a group of young performers descend into the Israeli desert and take a cross from the roof of their bus. They don makeshift semi-Biblical costumes and begin to sing the Passion Play. The settings used are all natural: Roman temple ruins, deep sun-lit caves, wide barren deserts, bleak and arid mountain tops, luscious gardens and sea shores (probably the Mediterranean). There are no attempts at recreating the settings as they are thought to have appeared nearly 2000 years ago. Such attempts at magnificence would have distracted from the Man whose life and death changed the course of humanity.

Ted Neeley is the perfect type for the character of Jesus, torn between his divinity and humanity. Standing at barely 5' 10", he is no longer the towering figure among the disciples, imposing by his presence alone. Neeley, with his thin blondish hair and his wispy beard comes across as a gentle-mannered soul who becomes annoyed and embittered by the indifference of his contemporaries to the words of his Father, by their continuous determination to fight one another (re: "Why are you so obsessed with fighting?") and by their absolute disrespect for the temple erected for the worship of his Father.

Jesus' task was not an easy one and Neeley brings out the MAN faced with death at the age of 33. There was a role to be played, a plan to be followed to the very end. There were commitments to be honored and the road was going to be rough. And all at once it was creeping up on Jesus that he was going to suffer, like a mortal man, like one of us. And the fear gripping his heart was also in every line of Neeley's face and hung so heavily on his every word that it became hard to swallow. The despair of the night held onto him and when the morning came, there was nothing to do but finish the job that he had been assigned.

Carl Anderson is a down-to-earth Judas -- black, angry and riddled with doubts over his role as Christ's betrayer. His aim was to bring about a confrontation between Jesus and the Romans. He wanted Jesus to assert himself as king of the Jews. He did not want to betray Jesus and he hung himself when everything went wrong. Judas, through Anderson's protrayal is strong, determined and anti-establishment. In this last respect, he was perhaps closer to Jesus, in ideals, than any other apostle.

Yvonne Elliman is another of the great performers of this rock opera. Her voice acts as a soothing ointment to Jesus and his apostles as she follows them around - under the disguise Mary Magdelene, tending to their every need and providing warmth and tenderness as her only way of being close to the man whose powers over her she finds both enticing and disturbing. Her confusion remains to the end as she sings "Can't we start all over, again?" a new song, not present in the original play.

Barry Dennen's Pilate, I found quite likeable. The English-accented Roman noble, disgusted over Jesus' refusal to save himself finally gives in to the deafening cries of a blood thirsty crowd chanting "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

A scene I found quite hilarious in its eccentricity was that of King Herod's "court". Only a Mostel (Junior) could have pulled such a stunt without any tasteless exaggerations. A colourful idea indeed!

In the decors, in the choice of characters, in the songs and in the choreography -- the magnificence of Norman Jewison's artistry is every present. The scenes that are presented show depth and vitality, warmth and affection, rage and confusion, sorrow and death. Every frame is alive with human emotions communicating to humans. The "palm feast" crawls with children and smiles and carnival spirit -- the mood is that of rejoicing: "Hosanna! Hosanna!" The choreography accompanying the song "God, you know I love you!" with the use of freeze frames, slow motion and other cinema magic, conveys the almost inconceivable and impractical demands made on Jesus. The "Last Supper" and the anguish of the crucifixion itself are brilliantly photographed, a masterpiece of good taste and poignant simplicity.

Whatever your beliefs in this world may be, **Jesus Christ Superstar** is a unique experience in sound, sights, and emotions. Norman Jewison has succeeded in producing a fresh dramatic experience with musical modernity from the greatest story every told.