Entertainment

A Week Of Cultural Diversity

The Big Picture



Joel Calabrese

The Big Picture was not the best concert. Though I imagine this was through no fault of their own. This six member band is based in Halifax and have released their first CD "Just passin' by . . ." if the CD is anything like their performance last Friday night, it is great. These six guys in their 20's have managed to blend their individual styles and inter-continental backgrounds in an amazing way. Their songs are original and interesting and they have an awesome sound. They have even managed to blend a violin, into the mix as well, with surprising results. I have no doubts that The Big Picture will go far.

And now I gripe. This concert was made possible by the Festival for Cultural Diversity. I blame them, in part, for the poor turn-out. The attendance fluctuated between 10 and 20 during the course of the evening. Which was a shame because there was no energy from the crowd. I could go on about the general apathy of the students towards anything that goes on here . . . but who cares.

The concert began an hour late. Whoever was managing the technical stuff had to keep doing sound checks. The night began on the wrong foot. This, coupled with the low turn-out, resulted in a poor atmosphere and an unenjoyable experience.

But buy the Big Picture CD, it's great.

CANADIAN NEW KID

by Ms. Kay Nandlall

One of the highlights of the cultural diversity week organized by students at UNB, was the play "The New Canadian Kid", by Dennis Foon. The play, based on a concept by Jane Howard, provided us with a window into the lives of immigrants in Canada, through the experiences of the principal character, Nick (Enrique Serrano). Nick immigrated with his parents to Canada, with the hopes and dreams that everything would continue to be the way it was in their homeland. Unfortunately, these hopes were crushed when faced with the problems most immigrants encounter. Language difficulties, cultural differences, racism, ethnocentrism, poverty and strained relationships between parents and children are a few examples of the difficulties that the family faced. Dennis Foon makes his hero's plight of learning English and interacting with his friends, Mench (Miriam Khomari) and Mug (Michelle Daigle), believable and humourous.

Throughout the play, the audience was given a chance to experience what it is like to be in someone else's shoes, when they could not understand

What makes one person jump out of their box and experience another culture and be helpful and makes another stay in their box and put up barriers against people?

the language being spoken to them. Nick spoke English, while his classmates Mench and Mug spoke gibberish. It was quite humourous when we could not understand what Mench and Mug were saying, when they sang "Bo Nadaaaran Vos bass et terridblam", which means O' Canada, our home and native land. Nick faced the taunts of Mug, and the support of Mench; Mug did not like his food and made negative comments such as "She will die of the smell of Nick's food." She broke Nick's bowl that his friend had given him from his homeland, angry that Nick held her chocolate bar and spiteful when she smashed it because he had held it. When Nick's family asked who hurt him and broke his bowl, he lied, and only later disclosed the truth that Mug was bullying him. The rest of the cast included: Kel (Rosa Serrano), Jen (Madeline McDaniel), Gran (Susana Serrano) and Mother (Baphetsile Motsa).

What made Mug a bully? What made Mench a friend? What makes one person willing to experience a different culture and another to hate and put up barriers against it? These are the questions that this play attempted to convey to the audience. The audience who attended the opening of the play, was given the chance to see how difficult it is on individuals who are from a different culture, and the changes that occur when diverse culture come together. "The New Canadian Kid" is an excellent first attempt by Dennis Foon, and is a good introductory play to create awareness of diverse cultures for young people. Ron Spurles' direction, and the excellent effort of the cast, made this an enjoyable performance. It left us with new insights of the problems that immigrants face, when encounter a new culture.

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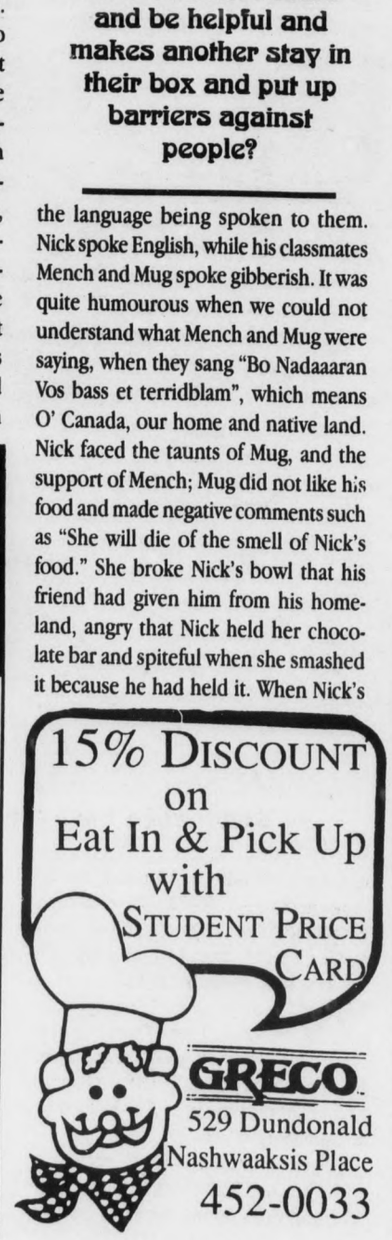
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