

Entertainment

Hayenga sparkles in "Elephant Man"

by Jerry Szypaniak

The life of John Merrick (a.k.a. the elephant man) has received a resurgence of attention in the past few years with several plays and, most recently, a movie focusing on it. Probably the most well-known of these is Bernard Pomerance's highly acclaimed dramatic play "THE ELEPHANT MAN."

The play "THE ELEPHANT MAN" deals with John Merrick (played by Jeff Hayenga) in his later years, spent as a sideshow freak in England until he was befriended by the young Dr. Frederick Treves (Ken Ruta) who then cared for him for 4 years until Merrick's bizarre death in 1890. (He died as an indirect result of his strange disorder, neurofibromatosis, which produced disfiguring and crippling growths all over his body).

In the American National Theater and Academy's production, the elephant man is portrayed without any real costume or make-up. Instead, in the beginning of the play, the audience is shown slides of the real John Merrick (taken while he was at the London Hospital, Whitechapel) and then forced to rely upon memory and the contortions of Hayenga. This approach is quite effective in its uses in the play. While providing the observer with an actual representation of Mer-

rick's affliction, it allows the audience an opportunity to warm up to the intriguing personality of John Merrick, as it is unfolded on stage, without completely turning them off with his physical aberration. A realistic representation might just evoke a response of pure pity for the cripple which would interfere with the understanding of the advanced development of John Merrick, the person. The only problem is that any true appreciation of the real Merrick's abnormalities being the same as the play's Merrick may be forgotten. The audience doesn't see the character the same way that everyone that actually met him did. However, the audience doesn't have the same amount of time to become accustomed to his physical appearance, so this compromise is well taken.

The overall presentation is quite effective. The acting in the play is generally rather good with Hayenga (replaced on Broadway by the highly celebrated David Bowie) putting in a more than convincing job with his physical contortions and his quavering, high-pitched voice. Although some lesser, supporting roles were filled by players who seemed a little disinterested in acting, the performances by the main characters (esp. Hayenga) pretty much allows one to forget any less than satis-

factory performances.

From the mood setting, somber opening notes of the lone cello to the final curtain, "THE ELEPHANT MAN" offers a pitying, yet understanding and even appreciative look at a man who suffered at the hands of nature and at

the hands of his fellowman, but was not mentally maimed through bitterness or self-pity. It also provides, without losing the overall

serious tone of the play, a tongue-in-cheek look at contemporary and Victorian thought. But most im-

portantly, it is a good play.

("THE ELEPHANT MAN" is currently playing at the Forrest Theater in Philadelphia for a one month run. It is also enjoying continued success at the Booth Theater on Broadway.)

Main Point: end of an era?

by Mark Reilly

Since its opening in 1964 the Main Point, located on Lancaster Avenue in Bryn Mawr, has provided the Philadelphia area with an outstanding array of jazz, folk, blues, and rock. Many of music's biggest names started at the Main Point. Stars like Bruce Springsteen, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, George Thorogood, and Jackson Browne have all made numerous appearances at the Point.

With such outstanding talent haunting the Main Point, it seems hard to believe that the club is in financial straits and under the threat of closing. The loss of the Main Point, Philadelphia Magazine's number one suburban club, would be a blow to the area as a whole. Today, as in the past, the Main Point maintains high standards, offering the best in new talent as well as many old favorites. It is a mystery to me how, even with the club's excellent reputation, people can be obli-

ous to the value of the Main Point.

All tickets at the club are general admission, but the club is small and even in the last row you are literally right next to the stage. Tickets are easy to get through Ticketron or at the Main Point itself. You don't even have to camp out; there are two shows a night. Many of the finest local bands frequent the Main Point, and appearances by legends like Don McLean

and Tom Rush are not out of the ordinary. The kitchen facilities are modest, but the brownies are first rate and the service is good. In general, the atmosphere is always energetic but much more personal than the Spectrum or other arenas. If you're over 21, B.Y.O.B., and if you're not, just go for the music. In any case, do it soon or you may be too late.



David Lindley, Bruce Springsteen, and Jackson Browne in Main Point dressing room.

T and C defend station format

by Timmy and the Colonel

Last Friday, *The Hawk* ran the article **One Man's View: DJ attacks new wave**, and since this was a criticism of both our article (**Food for thought for the radio listener**) and our work as Program Director and Music Director of WSJR, we felt we should answer his article in order to set the record straight.

Firstly, Jack Myers (the writer of the article) tells us he is going to provide the readers with some food for thought to counter the fourteen questions we posed in the previous week. Well, Jack almost answered one of them, but he had his facts all mixed up. It was a good try, though.

He tells us that listeners tune into popular stations because they cater to what is most popular. True enough. Unfortunately, it is the thinking of these stations that keeps things stagnant in music. Everybody's scared to play something that is new or different for fear of losing closed-minded listeners. (Hasn't rock music always strived on growth and newness?) Catering to the most popular (or average) tastes is the same argument ABC-TV uses for keeping *Three's Company* and *Charlie's Angels* on the air, isn't it?

We can't figure out exactly where he got the idea that we want you to accept, "the scenario of a frustrated college student chained to an unfriendly radio, being forced to hear 'Rosanita' one more time." He does make a good point, though. While it may be far from a majority, there are plenty of people who are tired of Philadelphia radio being consistently behind the times.

No, Jack, there are not a lot of people clamoring to hear the Dead Boys and XTC, but eight years ago there were less than fifty people in Philadelphia who would pay to see Bruce Springsteen at the Main Point, yet at that time the then-progressive WMMR took a chance and played his records, and

featured him live from the Main Point. Places like the Main Point and Electric Factory Club of yesteryear have been replaced by the Starlight Ballroom and Emerald City today when it comes to showcasing unknown artists.

Last week's article tells us that music becomes popular when it has the quality to be accepted by a plurality of people. Wrongo. A song becomes popular when it receives so much airplay that it sticks in the public's minds. We have all had the experience of finding ourselves humming or knowing the words to a song we hated. The music that becomes popular is the music the radio programmers decide should be popular. Music is not to be judged bad or good simply because it gets a lot of airplay; and conversely, it isn't necessarily good or bad only because it doesn't receive it.

Supply and demand are next brought up by Jack. This argument would be appropriate if we were discussing bars of soap or light bulbs; but instead of talking about a product, we are speaking of music, which is an artform.

From this point on, last week's article might have been entitled, "DJ attacks Timmy and the Colonel", inasmuch as it is a criticism of our work as officers of WSJR rather than any type of music. Whether or not the school newspaper is the proper place for members of organizations to air their grievances with the leadership of that club is a question we will not go into here.

Jack makes the argument that our programming is repetitive. He would not think so if he had studied the policies of the major radio stations as we have. At most of the other stations in town, DJ's are lucky if they can choose one or two songs per hour for themselves. Our staff members can pick more than half of their program content.

He states that we do not classify Blondie as new wave at the station. This is just not true. We can't figure out exactly why Jack

would make this up.

The question is then brought up as to why the policies of a major organization that receives funding dependent on "the whims of a handful of people." If WSJR is to be programmed by that which is the most popular among the student body, then so should other clubs, like the Caps and Bells, the Hawk, the Greatonian and the Crimson and Gray. Each of these organizations (all of which, in one way or another, receives money from the pockets of all students) has an editor-in-chief or director. The decisions of these clubs, therefore, come down to a few people. The fact remains, though, that this is a college, and for most of us it is the last chance to be creative, without having the worry of turning a profit.

No one ever said that college students should like only music that is new and different, but we are asking everyone to open their minds a little. It has been said that a lack of openness to new things is a sure sign of lost youth. It's easy to make fun and laugh at the Cramps, the Silicon Teens and Dow Jones and the Industrials when you've never heard them, but your talking about something you don't know about. Give them a listen before you ridicule them — your arguments will have credence.

WSJR will continue to program for those with open enough minds to accept music that is new and in many cases different. This music will make up about 40% of our airtime. The rest of the time will consist of conventional rock and roll, and our specialty programs — jazz, oldies, folk and classical. As you can see, we are attempting to cater to those who Philadelphia commercial radio largely chooses to ignore. The last thing this city needs is another radio station that sounds like the ones we already have. In this area of conformity, we will proudly be non-conformists.

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