

Entertainment

"Classy Broadway" - fitting title

By JOHN SOMMER
Herald Special

There are two Americas. America as an actual country and America as a state of mind.

The first, like all countries in the world, since we rarely act on what we preach, falls short of its own propaganda, but the second is an extremely potent myth that keeps the hopes of the persecuted for a better day alive in every corner of our poor planet.

The power of American popular art rests in that myth, and the universal appeal of American popular art is based on its ability to express the longing of the poor and powerless for the good and just life.

This was brought home to me last week at the John Elliott Theatre. The occasion was "Classy Broadway," a wonderful evening of American popular

music, the brainchild of A. Dale Wood, the director of the Georgetown Choral Society, and Jane Malton-McGinnis, a classy night club singer from south of the border.

The evening started with piano renditions and songs from "West Side Story," the towering Bernstein and Sondheim musical about two rival gangs, the "Jets" and the "Sharks," whose members are as far from sharing the American Dream as you can imagine.

Songs by Lerner and Loewe, Rogers and Hammerstein, Cole Porter, George Gershwin and others followed, and almost two hours later, after Jane Malton-McGinnis had added several riveting encores from "The Phantom of the Opera," the audience was on its feet, thanking the two artists with long and en-

thusiastic applause.

No matter how good the pianist, and A. Dale Wood was a most sensitive and reliable performer, this kind of evening depends on the singer.

After some initial problems with the sound system, Miss Malton-McGinnis did wonderfully well.

To begin with, the lady has great looks and a fabulous wardrobe. She went through eight costume changes, all of them spectacular creations. Did she design them herself? These outfits were so striking, and they helped so much to establish the right mood, that I would have liked to know the name of the designer.

A few times the singer changed her costume in full view of everybody, and while this gave the viewer the sensation of watching a chrysalis changing into a butterfly, for instance, I would have liked it better had she changed behind the screen that stood conveniently to the right of the stage. This would have made the quick changes appear magical and less distracting.

The program alternated from slow and serious songs to others in a funny or frivolous mood, which gave the evening a pleasant and varied pace. But I felt that Jane Malton-McGinnis' forte are the slow songs of longing and heartbreak.

A song like "My Heart Belongs to Daddy" seems to put a strain on her personality, but grand songs like "Begin the Beguine," "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," "It Ain't Necessarily So," allow her voice and her whole being to blossom so strongly that she becomes an artist of the first order. I will never forget her interpretation of "It Ain't Necessarily So."

She is very much a fine-boned white lady with an aristocratic face surrounded by blonde hair, but with this song, standing very still in the middle of the stage and wailing her compressed pain into the ears of an unfeeling world, she became a woman of the South, a true heroine and victim of our rapacious culture.

Great art offers catharsis. Entertainment, by comparison, is far too often designed to merely divert us and keep us content. "Classy Broadway," in its best moments, purged the emotions.

When the lights came on I sensed that a little moracele had happened in our town. Two remarkable musicians had taught us that art is the finest and the most noble of all human accomplishments.



A classy and vivacious performer, Jane Malton-McGinnis, teamed up with pianist A. Dale Wood to present 'Classy Broadway' - a review of Broadway tunes down through the years - last Friday and Saturday evenings to appreciative audiences at the John Elliott Theatre, located in the Halton Hills Cultural Centre on Church St. in Georgetown. (Herald photos by Colin Gibson)

Little Theatre production benefits Georgetown Drug Abuse Centre

By LOIS FRASER
Herald Special

Most of the residents of Halton Hills have never heard of the Georgetown Drug Abuse Centre. That's good news, since people are in deep trouble by the time they need its services. For clients it's a lifeline, a place of solace, a place where a caring counsellor can literally save your life and pull you back from the depths of despair and dependency.

The Drug Abuse Centre is run by a volunteer board of 10 individuals. While some have had drug abuse strike personally, most are just concerned individuals who know that Kristin Bulmer can make a difference. As executive director, she is the only paid employee. Kris is enthusiastic about her job in a way few of us can rival. That's because she knows counselling works.

Kris started her career as a registered nurse then expanded into substance abuse counselling. She also teaches at the Toronto Centre for Psychotherapy. For

the past 6 years she has worked in Georgetown. With a typical caseload of 30-40 people who receive individual counselling and a parents support group of 12, she has her hands full. The parent support group teaches families how to cope without "enabling the user" or making it easy. Kristin is particularly encouraged that the parents group are building support for themselves and helping each other during crises.

The Georgetown Drug Abuse Centre is surrounded by misconceptions such as: these services are available elsewhere (wrong - this is the only service of its type in the Georgetown/Acton area), the clients are all young, reckless teenagers (wrong - many adults are also clients), they only help people who abuse drugs (wrong - alcohol abuse is targeted too), they must be government funded (wrong - this is a non-profit organization with many supporters.)

Kristin is pleased that substance abuse is one of the few

areas that has received increased government spending federally. Kristin's main frustration with her job is the amount of time she spends fundraising rather than counselling. The Georgetown Drug Abuse Centre offers free counselling to all its clients.

Generous support from The Optimist Club, Lions Club, Peter Pomeroy's Golf Tournament and some grants from the Region have kept the centre afloat. Kristin guards her budget carefully since she never knows where help is coming from next. Typically, when someone offered her free room and board for a year, she said, "That's great. Now I'll be able to take less salary."

How can you help? We invite you to show your support by purchasing a ticket to Georgetown Little Theatre's Comedy "Lunch Hour". G.L.T. is donating a performance on Thursday, April 18th and the Drug Abuse Centre is the lucky recipient. Tickets are \$12.00 and are available at Shoppers Drug Mart and at the door.

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