The Seagull, written by Anton P. Chekhov; directed by Steve Grothe. Star- ring Wendy Almeda, Michael Mesrobian, Morris Hyman, Ted Zalemski, Rami Marash, Debe Logue, John Sickel, Joel Hersch, Cynthia Schwell; now playing at NuVeloic

The mangled paperback mache seagull that makes its appearance in The Harlequin Theater Company's production of Anton Chekhov's The Seagull is an apt metaphor for the rest of the production. The poor bird lay sadly in the middle of the stage, forscd by some cruel trick of fate to make this inauspicious debut. The company severely overstretched their technical and artistic capabilities; the result is a con- volted, ineffective, ludicrous production. Inadequate performance space imposed a severe limitation. The stage, perhaps ten by ten by twenty feet appeared to

The stage lacked a curtain; all scene breaks were suggested by light cues. The lights were dimmed so many times that the play was transformed from a full-length production into sets of short vignettes that seemed to bear no relation to each other.

The Seagull, as written by Chekhov, didn't have a plot. Unfortunately, this was not the case with this particular production. The director changed the order and delivery of lines so often that it was impossible to fol- low the play. Perhaps Mr. Grothe did not have faith in the ability of his audience to notice important lines. Several times dur- ing the play he had actors repeat important lines directly to the audience after they had just delivered the lines to other characters on stage. This did nothing to clarify the play; aside from disrupting the play's natural flow, it made the viewer feel that he was at a revival meeting. At one point, Mr. Groche chose to have all nine actors running across the tiny stage yelling six syllable Russian names and unintentionally col- liding with each other as if they were the Keystone cogs. This decision helped emphasize the confusion and lack of worth-while direction the play exhibited.

The quality of acting was bad, dis- ingenuous by the frequency and bluntness of mistakes. Wendy Almeda, as Irena and Morris Hyman, as Trigorin were clearly overwhelmed by their roles. They seemed to have no idea as to how to approach them. Michael Mesrobian gave a band performance as Konstantin; his only memorable moment occurred just before the intermission. In a very intense scene Konstantin attempts to shoot himself. This Mr. Mesrobian finally managed to do, after first getting his finger caught in his mouth and looking like a local "Oz". Ted Zalemski, as Alfa, and Ronni Marash as Polina, could have made the perfect couple but their task had been to portray Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. Mr. Zakenst delivered his lines in an unnatural cadence, punctu- ating them all too frequently with hos-ho- ho. The only possible performances were given by Cynthia Schwell and Joel Hersch.

The Harlequin Theater Company failed at trying to present Chekhov's play as a tragic masterpiece; their production is at best a comic travesty. Chekhov's script contains the line: "What we need are new art forms." That may be so, but it is ap- parent that this production is not represen- tative of new art forms at all but rather that old favorite — bad theater.

— Jerri-Lynn Soufield

From sublime to sleazy - 10 cc, Root Boy

Zoom, Root Boy Slim and the Sex Change Band with the Roustettes on A & M Records SP-9096

Yes, fants, gross still works. After a year or so of legal hassles, label changes and the like, Root Boy Slim and the Sex Change Band featuring the Roustettes have released their second album. Zoom, Root Boy, whose real name is Foster MacKenzie, has gone from being a local celebrity in the Washington, D.C. area to a role as some sort of lumbering embodiment of the Seventies.

MacKenzie and the Sex Change band carved a niche for themselves in Washington by performing such minor classics as "Boogie 'Til You Puke" and "Christmas at K-Mart" for barrooms all over. Their sound showed a clear lack of practicality or feasibility. The band was discovered by former Stax producer Gary Katz, Root Boy and the Band were originally signed to Warner Bros.

Their first album was a collection of songs that had become standards in the D.C. area. After a few playings, the album wore out. Root Boy's drug-dazed ramblings were amusing once or twice but after that the same became routine.

Zoom picks up exactly where the first album left off. The lyrics all deal with drugs in unimaginable quantities, peep shows, sleazy peeks and poodles. If you're a real adolescent the mere mention of all this may make you all hot and bothered but if you've moved on from those you'll probably just be bored.

The album cover is something that has to be seen to be believed. While the Sex Changes lurked along in true lounge lizard, the-band-wore-blue-shorts fashion, Root and the Roustettes perform any number of unspeakable.

The nicest thing I can say about Zoom is that it was recorded at Silver Spring, Md.'s Track Recorders. It's nice to see that a hometown boy makes good he doesn't forget his roots.

Forget this album. Go see Root Boy at the Paradise December 20th...The show is worth it.

— Claudia Perry

Greatest Hits 1972-1979 19cc on Polydor Records, PD-1-6274

Just in time for the holiday season, the greatest hits rampage has started. As usual, all sorts of groups that you weren't aware were great or had hits manage to fill albums with swell, 10cc has done it too, but in a more satisfying way.

The album covers most of the band's career, omitting any work from the How Dare You! Album. This isn't surprising, the band split and reformed after this one was released. Most of the other albums are represented by what Polydor considers the band's greatest work.

Fans of the band will miss the inclusion of "Waterfall." Originally turned down by the Beatles' Apple Records, the song resulted in 10cc being signed to UA Records by one Jonathan King. Thus began the phony English march that ended their record labels later.

There are some minor classics here. "Donna," the band's combination of group telephone song, is a fauxtetto romp, that left many of the band's first critics in doubt as to the band's sex, "Rubber But- lets," is a seven-minute ramble about a private dance that becomes a riot. An in- treming chaplain begs the prisoners to cool it, they don't, and the warden orders the rubber bullets. The song most Unique Number One in Idaho or some place equally remote. It's good that it's revolved here as 10cc's first album is no longer in print.

Also unavailable is The Original Soundtrack, a two hour soundtrack "From Please turn to page 7..."