

# Once Upon A Mattress

## Off to a Cushy Start with the Musical Theatre Guild

*Once Upon A Mattress*, presented by the MIT Musical Theatre Guild, August 29, 1981.

The Princess and the Pea: Once upon a time, on a stormy night, a princess arrived at the door of a castle . . . Everyone knows the story, it's been told for years. The real story, however, has remained a well-kept secret. A certain minstrel was a guest at the aforementioned castle, and he got the inside scoop . . .

It is on this premise that *Once Upon A Mattress* is based. The authors take great advantage of the flimsy construct and pack the story with crazy characters: a mute, skirt-chasing king, his shrewish wife, a daunted prince, an ex-vaudeville wizard, and more. Add a generous number of well-penned tunes and a fast-paced script — resulting in light enjoyable entertainment.

Light, enjoyable entertainment — the perfect summer production, which the Musical Theatre Guild carried off perfectly. The guild seems to have better luck with small-cast plays, probably because they can focus more on the acting and ease up on the technical aspects. All with good results; I have never heard better singing or seen better dancing in any other MTG show.

The acting was also on par with any professional production. Of particular note was Bob Shepard-Blue's performance as King Sextimus the Silent; he managed to create a vivid, realistic character without uttering a line of dialogue. Jane Graham was a suitably aggravating Agravaine (also a bit loud), but she seemed to work best when played opposite her henpecked son, Prince Dauntless. Jim Mahoney found the perfect balance of naivete and manic energy that was necessary for the Dauntless part.



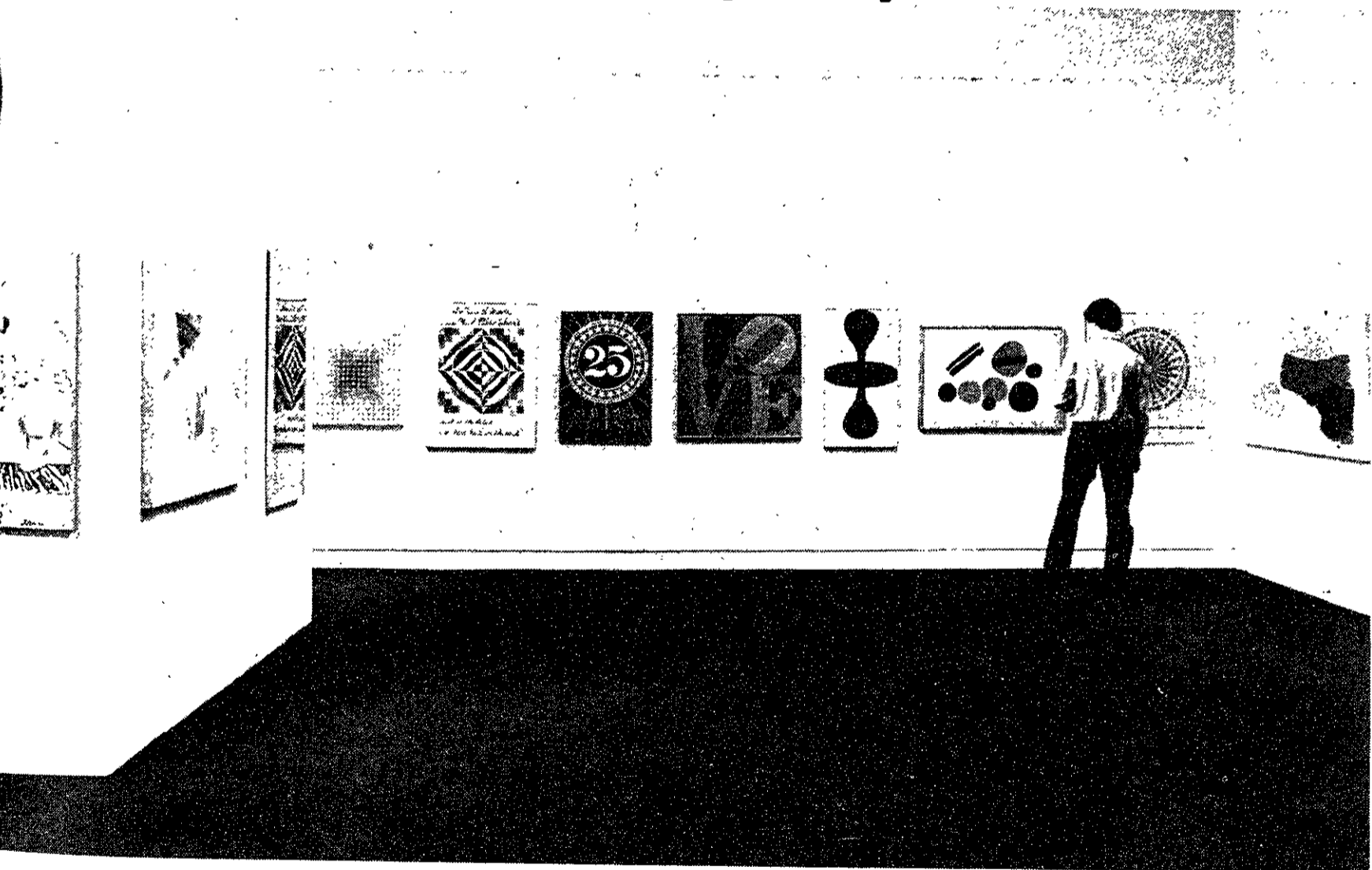
Rather than single out all of the performers, it could be best to say that all of the acting was well above par. The flaws with the show lay more with the staging and music. Quite a few lighting cues were missed; another technical run-through should iron out the difficulties. I don't know if another run-through (or two) will help the band. At times they sounded either out of tune or in danger of drowning out

the actors, problems that were most in evidence during the song "Sensitivity." However, this did not detract from the overall quality of the show.

This will be the last weekend to really enjoy yourself before things get awful (once again), so go and get a few laughs — see the show before it's too late.

David Shaw

# Creativity Bankruptcy? Borrow It!



Summer *must* be over — things are happening again. I strolled by MIT's Hayden Gallery yesterday afternoon on the chance that maybe they'd pulled a little something together, only to be completely bowled over by a massive exhibit of prints and posters that sends off this year's student art-loan program. I'm still salivating.

The Committee on the Visual Arts has massed a dazzling selection of the best in 20th Century graphic work; nearly every significant contemporary artist is represented: Rauschenberg, Lichtenstein, Calder, Motherwell, and Warhol to name a few. Best of all, these original works are available to MIT students (Full-time, registered only, pleez . . .) to hang in their own messy little rooms. Both the Catherine N. Stratton (wife of MIT's 11th president) Collection of Graphic Art and the List Student Loan Program Collection are on exhibit, encompassing some 200 framed works. The first collection was established by the Council for the Arts at MIT in 1966; the second was drawn in 1977 from collector/patrons Albert and Vera List's gift to the Institute. The Loan Program aside,

both collections make spectacular exhibits in themselves.

The works are made available through a lottery which will be held at 5pm on September 18. Each student submits a preference card listing three top choices by 1pm September 18. Cards and details are available at the Hayden Gallery. Certain works are available only to student groups and are designated for "group space" only. Student groups recognized by the Association for Student Activities and the Undergraduate Association are eligible for these specially designated works and for all the other prints as well.

There is significant competition: 830 students submitted their names, last year, for some 170 prints. However, this problem pales next to that of *choosing* . . . Some large prints, like Friedel Dzubas's color silkscreen, "Philharmonic," with its bold swaths of color are clearly suited to large working spaces or "group areas." On the other hand, the wide selection of artist-designed posters (impressive works commissioned by every organization imaginable, from the Art Institute of

Chicago to the New York Film Festival) are more conversational and suggest a living-space setting.

But how does one choose between Warhol's infamous "Jackie Kennedy" litho and Chryssa's striking "Chinatown" serigraphs? Nothing in this exhibit is negligible and there is something for every taste. Peter Strand's set of serigraphs, decorative and precise, waver with color, vie for attention with Calder's vibrant, impulsive "Chevrons Noir Sur Rose et Jaune."

While you're making up your mind, tour the hallway exhibit outside the Hayden Gallery — "Looking At Prints from Boston Area Galleries" — a selection of prints borrowed to complement the Loan Program. These are not available to students, but no one should miss the opportunity to ogle this assemblage of Boston's finest holdings. Especially notable are the Rauschenberg ("Rookery Mound — Rose Bay," a fragmented and nostalgic lithograph), the Lichtenstein, Aldoph Gottlieb's "Green Foreground," and Alex Katz's "Blue Umbrella," with its pure true colors.

# ARTS

This is hard to imagine, but the Nucleo Eclettico Theatre, 216 Hanover Street, presents **Wanda and Her Dog**, a play about how a couple's marital problems affect their dog . . . September 3-19, 8pm, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday only. May require drugs.

The MIT Musical Theatre Guild presents **Once Upon A Mattress**, with performances on September 5 at 3:30pm, and on September 4, 5, 10, 11, 12 at 8pm. Tickets are \$4.50, or \$2.50 with MIT ID, and are available in Lobby 10 or at the MTG office. For information and reservations, call x3-6294.

# ON THE

**Levon Helm** (soft-rocker, she sneered) appears at cozy Jonathan Swift's, 30 Boylston Street, Harvard Square, on September 2.

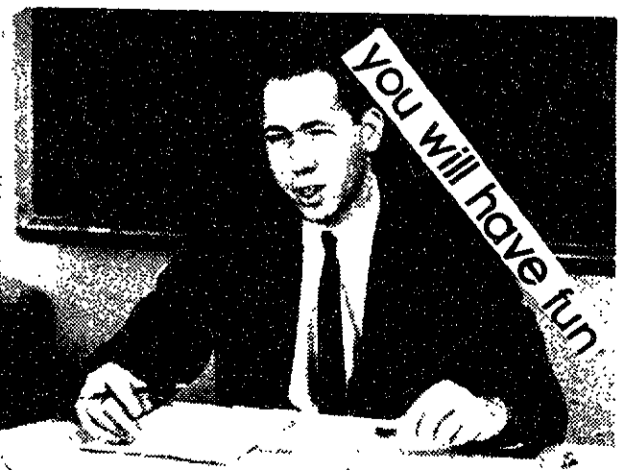
Some of Boston's most creative teenagers appear tonight at the Rat, 528 Commonwealth Avenue; **Vitamin** are a bunch of kids doing disjointed, danceable, highly original music. Also appearing are the Fans and an unannounced guest.

Tonite at Metro, England's **Psychedelic Furs** (who play here so often they should make this town their home) with the unlikely **Robert Ellis Orrall**, a Boston new-waver with a new album. The Furs, who purvey a distinctive apocalyptic sound, are politely playing two shows: one for all ages at 5pm, and one for the legalized crowd (20) at 10pm. Tickets are \$5.50 for the first show, and \$7.50 for the second.

# TOWN

**Dark Star** (directed by young American genius John Carpenter) and **Attack of the Killer Tomatoes** (directed by Steve Peace and John Devello) are two pieces of science fiction meta-trash playing this Wednesday and Thursday at the Coolidge Corner Cinema (call for showtimes, 734-2500).

Five years ago, Off the Wall Cinema was closed by the City of Cambridge for screening the controversial program called **Heart Throbs: Short, Non-Sexist Films of Sexuality and Sensuality**. Now, today through September 9, Off the Wall will once again present the original, uncensored **Heart Throbs**. There will be shows daily at 5:45, 7:50, and 9:55pm, plus Friday and Saturday at midnight.



**ELWOOD P. STROUPE, MSChE, PURDUE '62** is a design engineer at the Atomic Power Equipment Department. He has contributed to the design of Dresden 2's reactor—heart of the system. He'll follow it right through installation.