



John Ziegler and Peg French talk things over in this scene from the Boal Barn production of "How the Other Half Loves," playing in Boalsburg through July 9.

LP mixes folk and electric styles

Steeleye's music antique rock

By TOM MARCINKO
Collegian Staff Writer
THE STEELEYE SPAN STORY — ORIGINAL MASTERS by Steeleye Span (Chrysalis)

A writer whose name escapes me once described Steeleye Span's music as "antique rock 'n' roll." I wish I'd said that, because for me it brings to mind electric guitars and amplifiers that you have to crank up before playing, speakers with big horns, like an old Victrola, and wrought-iron microphone stands with intricate designs.

The phrase describes Steeleye's music, a blend of modern rock and traditional British folk, even better than the title of the recent album "Rocket Cottage." "Folk-rock" can mean anything from electric Dylan to Peter Gabriel's "Solsbury Hill," but Steeleye Span, along with Fairport Convention, was the first to give the hybrid form a distinctly British sound. Their music carries a vaguely medieval air about it. Traffic's "John Barleycorn," Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven," and much of Jethro Tull owes its existence to groups like Fairport and Steeleye.

Though I like Fairport Convention very much — "Liege and Lief" is particularly recommended — I prefer Steeleye. Fairport's music, with few exceptions ("Tam Lin," "Matty Grove") is acoustic mainstream folk. Steeleye's music is a true fusion of the acoustic and electric forms.

"Original Masters" includes 22 of the band's best cuts, culled from nine albums. Most are traditional songs arranged for modern audiences. That the formula works says a lot for the durability of the old ballads and the flexibility of rock music. That Steeleye is a strong enough band to use the same formula for nine albums, and make it work, says a lot for the group's talent.

album review

Maddy Prior's lead vocals are ethereal or earthy by turns, sometimes both in the same song. At her best she projects slyness masked by innocence. A really proper young maid wouldn't put her voice to work on a grotesque ballad like "Little Sir Hugh," the kind of song Gahan Wilson would write if he were a

musician instead of a cartoonist. Prior's romanticism surfaces on songs such as "Dark-Eyed Sailor."

Tim Hart, the male lead, is at his best in "Allison Gross," "Seven Hundred Elves," and especially "Fighting for Strangers," in which he and Prior sing a duet backed with light percussion and little else. It comes as something of a surprise to find an antiwar song centuries old.

Bob Johnson's lead guitar, though, brings Steeleye into the 20th century. His riffs, combined with typically catchy arrangements, preserve the historical roots of the music without compromising the authentic rock sound.

Minor complaints: Steeleye's early work was mainly acoustic. This collection is slanted a bit too heavily towards rock. My favorite, "Orfeo" (from "Rocket Cottage") isn't on the LP. No jigs, either.

Even so, "The Steeleye Span Story" is two disks' worth of good folk-rock, and a better introduction to the band than you'd get by randomly selecting two or three of their previous records. It's also a fine introduction to an archaic but appealing genre of popular music.

the daily Collegian arts

'Star Wars' best show in town

"Star Wars" is the first entirely successful blend of the science fiction and adventure genres. Time magazine was right: it is the year's best movie. Writer-director George Lucas and special effects wizard John Dykstra show how much fun you can have at the movies while still keeping your hands to yourself. Starring Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Alec Guinness, and assorted aliens, monsters and robots. It deserves a bigger screen than the Garden Theater's.

"The Deep" has a few slow spots compensated by scenes of intense suspense. Robert Shaw is effective as a gruff old salt, but Nick Nolte gets a lot of acting competition from a moray eel. Jacqueline Bisset and Eli Wallach are in it, too. Worth seeing at the State.

"Rocky," the Oscar-winner for best

film of 1976, is still here. Sylvester Stallone plays a nice-guy boxer who gets a Big Break and makes it to the top. Like "Star Wars," its popularity reflects the public's desire for "up" movies with good guys and happy endings, and like Lucas' film, it gets away with it without looking foolishly optimistic. The Screening Room.

Otherwise, it might be a hot summer — but not for movies.

"A Bridge too Far" is a numbingly dull war film which wastes an all-star cast on a script by William Goldman that should have been mercilessly blue-pencilled. Director Richard Attenborough portrays war as a Sunday-school picnic until the Allies start losing. War then, all of a sudden, becomes hell. So does moviegoing. Cinema 1.

"The Other Side of Midnight" could have been pleasant cotton candy for

the brain if it were about 40 minutes shorter and 80 per cent more-believable. As it is, Frank Yablans' film about love and revenge leads one to believe he set about deliberately to insult the viewer's intelligence, and bore him in the process. But no director in his right mind would do that. The Movies.

"The Exorcist II: The Heretic" is John Boorman's inept sequel to the 1973 hit. The best thing about William Friedkin's original was that, however ugly it was, it forced even non-believers to temporarily accept the existence of Satan. "The Heretic" is so unconvincing that one must now call into question the existence of the devil, demons, witchcraft, ESP, hypnotism, locusts, psychiatrists, Richard Burton. . . Cinema II.

— Tom Marcinko

'Other Half' an amusing farce

By DAVID HUGHES
For the Collegian

Sex, in its most diluted and theatrically palatable form, is the major ingredient of the amusing farce "How the Other Half Loves" which opened Wednesday evening at the Boal Barn Playhouse in Boalsburg. The play, written by the talented Alan Ayckbourn, is always clever, often witty and sometimes downright funny.

The plot revolves around three couples, the Fosters, the Phillips, and the Detweilers. The husbands work together, the wives barely know each other; but Mr. Phillips "knows" Mrs. Foster. All is fine until one evening when our somewhat less than legitimate couple stay out on the town a little too long, which causes their respective spouses to become suspicious.

To relieve their mates' suspicion, both explain that they were only trying to help the Detweilers with their marital problems. But, as luck would have it,

this explanation won't do the trick. Unknown to them, the Detweilers are coming to dinner.

With the exception of a few twists, the basic plot changes very little from this point on. Ayckbourn sets the mood of high comedy very early in the show.

play review

One of the most interesting effects achieved by the author is a careful mixing of time and space. Even though several scenes take place at different times and in different places, we are able to see them develop simultaneously in what appears to be (but isn't) the same room.

With very few exceptions the acting varies from good to adequate. Peg French, in her role as the "fabulous" Fiona Foster, shows real polish and skill. Her performance is the most

consistent and believable of the lot. John Ziegler portrays her husband Frank with a great deal of energy and enthusiasm, but often carries his innate comic ability a bit too far.

I particularly enjoyed the performances of Peter Podol and Cindi Yost as the amusing William and Mary Detweiler. Pat Hazelton and Sabino Ranaudo round out a fine cast.

The technical aspects of the show were well-coordinated and skillfully executed. The set, for the most part, was also good. Only the brightly-painted floor, which looked like it came right out of "The Wizard of Oz," proved distracting.

The Boal Barn has done a fine job with this production. It is, for the most part, above average for a community theatre, and provides a fine evening's entertainment.

You can see "How the Other Half Loves" on July 1st and 2nd, and July 5th through 9th at 8:30 p.m. at the Boal Barn Playhouse.

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