

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Ten Days of Madness playwrighting festival

11–20 January
(Location varies)

The famous playwright George Bernard Shaw once stated, "You see things, and you say, 'Why?' But I dream of things that never were, and I say, 'Why was I running naked through my high school with my attractive English teacher laughing at me?'" At least, he said something like that. But while Shaw didn't realize his weird dream simply meant he may have been vulnerable and slightly bashful, you truly can realize your dream of becoming a great playwright like Shaw with the third annual Ten Days of Madness festival.

The merrymaking will include workshops for junior- and senior-high students by local playwrights such as Stewart Lemoine, presentations by guest playwrights, and a 24-hour playwright-a-thon.

Sonic Cubes

Art Gallery by Catherine Bechard and Sabin Hudon

Runs 11 January to 9 February
Latitude 53 (10248 106 Street)

Combining two popular artistic mediums—sound and three-dimensional geometric hexahedrons—this art display features a series of wooden cubes that make a variety of sounds when they are turned and shaken about.

Artists Bechard and Hudon, hailing from Montreal, showcase their interest in the auditory and visual aspects of perception, as well as their intrigue with acoustically produced sound, in their attempt to "make the anecdotal elements of our daily microcosm audible, creating a true environmental experience." You can also meet the artists and discuss their love for creating microcosms by shaking noise-producing wood blocks at a talk on 12 January at 8pm.

Spread the Net Benefit Concert

Featuring Change Methodical, Cassidy, Brian Toogood, and Letters to Elise
Saturday, 12 January at 8pm
The Velvet Underground, 18+

While it may seem obvious that the purpose of a show called Spread the Net would be to raise awareness about the new and exciting phenomenon that is the Internet, after some exhaustive research, the concert turns out to be spreading awareness about the spread of malaria in third-world countries.

Headlined by local groups Change Methodical—a local do-it-yourself punk band with a sound similar to Hot Water Music—and Cassidy, who describe themselves as "punk-influenced indie-pop rock & roll," all profits from the show go to spreadthenet.org, which donates bed nets to Africa and features a video by sponsors Rick Mercer and Belinda Stronach reading a heart-rending statement off a teleprompter.

George Carlin

Thursday, 17 January at 8pm
Jubilee Auditorium

Best known as the magical, diminutive conductor from *Shining Time Station* and Rufus from *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, George Carlin brings his onstage comedy act and love for anthropomorphic steam trains to the Jubilee Auditorium.

Heralded by Comedy Central as the second greatest standup comedian in history (aside from Richard Pryor), Carlin is known for his particularly filthy brand of humour, particularly his famous "Seven Words You Can't Say On Television" skit, which was central to several obscenity and First Amendment trials in the US Supreme Court in the '70s. The skit would likely warrant a mere 18A rating today.

JOHN KMECH
It's a metaphor



40oz of family bonding in *Carlins*

Set in Mill Woods, the play offers a sobering take on alcohol, family, loss, and remembrance

theatrepreview

The Mighty Carlins

Runs 10–20 January
Written by Collin Doyle
Directed by Michael Clark
Starring John Wright, Fredrick Zbryski, and James Hamilton
3rd Space (11516 103 Street)

MARIA KOTOVYCH
Arts & Entertainment Staff

"An alcoholic father and his alcoholic sons get together to commemorate the death of their mother, who died of alcoholism." It's hard to imagine this premise as the backdrop for a comedy, but that's exactly what *The Mighty Carlins* is striving for.

The Mighty Carlins introduces us to Leo Carlin and his two adult sons, Mike and Davie, who get together once a year on the anniversary of Mrs. Carlin's death. As with their other reunions, the men have a few beers (read: 48 or 50) and then spend the evening reminiscing (and then forgetting), arguing, and finally, bonding.

Director Michael Clark explains that while the play humorous, it's also very powerful, as it tackles the sobering theme of alcoholism and the effect that this problem has on families.

For instance, Mike and Davie's childhood was ruined by their parents' alcoholism, and now they're mad about it. Alcoholism is what killed their mother, leaving the home with nobody to provide the family with any kind of comfort.

The boys feel alienated and, as alcoholics, are unable to function normally. Mike is unemployed and always looking for the next get-rich-quick scheme; Davie is in a relationship with a suicidal woman, whom he's afraid

to leave in case she kills herself.

"It's a very challenging play. It's a very funny play, but it deals with alcoholism straight on, so it's full of unsavoury characters and kinda horrible things being said to people. So it's kinda tough," Clark says.

The Mighty Carlins won the Alberta Playwright's Competition in 2004, garnering a positive reception during a reading that was part of the award. Despite this, it had never been professionally produced prior to this performance, partially due to the topic (and the accompanying rough language) of the piece.

"A family will try to hold together against all odds. [The family bond] imprints very strongly on you, regardless of what you do to change that."

MICHAEL CLARK
MIGHTY CARLINS DIRECTOR

Clark says that he's honoured to be the first person to professionally produce *The Mighty Carlins*. As artistic director of Workshop West Theatre, he follows the mandate of putting on new plays from Canadian playwrights.

"This is one of the legendarily unproduced plays," he explains "I picked [*The Mighty Carlins*] because it's a brilliant piece of writing that's very funny, but also takes on a very serious social issue, which is the ravages that alcoholism has on a family."

The Mighty Carlins is set right here in Edmonton—specifically Mill Woods. As such, part of the play's message is intended to resonate with Edmontonians on another level.

It's set to not only make audiences reconsider their own relationship with alcohol, but also make people rethink the stereotypes associated with the district.

"Part of the humour that's in the play has to do with specific notions and misconceptions people have about Mill Woods, like that it's ridden with gangs, and it's scary and violent and stuff like that," Clark explains. "In actual fact, Mill Woods is somewhere around 90 000 people as a neighbourhood, and if you took it out of Edmonton, it would be the 3rd largest city in the province."

The Mighty Carlins was set in Mill Woods because that's where playwright Collin Doyle grew up; the play could have really been set in any suburban community, as a lack of information has led to Mill Woods' reputation as a scary and dangerous district of Edmonton.

"The madness of the play kinda contradicts the pastoral nature of Mill Woods," Clark says.

"The things that people know about Mill Woods is there's a pool, you can't ever find your way through it, it has a very large East Indian community, and there have been a few drive-by shootings there," he continues. "In actual fact, there have been drive-by shootings in many neighbourhoods in Edmonton, but for some reason, it's really stuck on Mill Woods."

While alcohol certainly has had its ravages on Leo, Mike and Davie, the family bond exerts an equally strong influence on the men. Davie organizes the reunion each year because he desperately wants them to be a family, as dysfunctional as it is. So the play does come with some hope attached.

"A family will try to hold together against all odds. [The family bond] imprints very strongly on you, regardless of what you do to change that," Clark says, of the play's message.