

Koller says that Billy's new image is forced, pretentious

By Mike Koller
Of The Print

Everyone loves Billy Joel. I mean it really looked like this guy was going to become our next big Italian crooner, another Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennett, even.

His two previous albums, "The Stranger" and "52nd Street," sold millions and millions of copies and he had nearly every romantic-minded American sighing to "Just the Way You Are," his syrupy sweet ballad of devotion and affection.

So what if his lyrics played upon over-used themes and cliché-ridden sentiments? Billy Joel never pretended to be much more than a nice, easy listening-type balladeer, nothing too radical, and after all Frankie and Tony are getting old fast.

But all that money and success did the typical thing and finally went to Billy boy's rapidly swelling head. He just wasn't satisfied being next in

line to a great tradition of crooners. No sir, he had to be something more. Billy wanted to appeal to those rock and rollers who could never tolerate the musical mush that made amorous couples from ages 16 to 60 swoon. Joel decided that he, too, could become a tough rock and roller. After all, Linda Ronstadt went from a country belle to a punkish femme fatale. Why couldn't he do the same from the male standpoint?

"Glass Houses" is the result of his arrogant decision. Even the album cover, showing Joel wearing a leather jacket and faded jeans throwing a rock at a glass house, tries to give the impression that Joel is now a tough rocker who means business. But Joel's tough guy image is so forced and full of pretentiousness that instead of being amazed at this guy's supposed adaptability, I just want to laugh at his tackiness.

Songs like his new single, "You May Be Right" and "Sometimes a Fantasy" are intended to be powerful anthems, but you end up feeling hatred for this horny, insensitive jerk who pants over telephones and treats his girlfriend like crap because

she won't put up with his immature attitude.

"Close to the Borderline" is another feeble attempt by Joel at rock and roll, but his fake yelps and over-emphasized phrasing turn this tune into another laugh. Joel's backup band rocks about as hard as the 101 strings orchestra doing a medley of Neil Diamond hits.

The rest of "Glass Houses" falls pretty much by the wayside. There are a couple of ballads, "You Were the One" and "Don't Ask Me Why," and one song I can't figure out called "Sleeping With the Television On," but nothing really worth rating a second listen.

Billy Joel was at least acceptable as a middle-of-the-road entertainer. Pretty love ballads always make people feel good, but then he went off and tried to be a rock and roller. Billy could have been the next Andy Williams, maybe even host his own TV show with the Osmond Brothers. But now he has to start from scratch again and that's not going to be easy. I just heard Bobby Vinton had his face lifted. The competition looks like it's going to be pretty tough this time, Billy.

Oregon premiere free to students

arts briefs

By Elena Vancil
Of The Print

Lighting and set crews, working on the Oregon premiere of "Wings," are putting the finishing touches on their individual projects. This week, those projects will combine and the result will be a performance that director, Jack Shields, believes will have significant social value.

Performances will begin Thursday at 8 p.m. in the McLoughlin Theater. They will continue at the same time on Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, there will be a matinee at 3:30 p.m.

Admission to this Oregon premiere will be free for all students with CCC identification. Senior citizens will also be admitted free.

"Wings" was written by the significant contemporary playwright, Arthur Kopit, after extensive medical research. Shields believes the potential social value of "Wings" equals "Hair" when it emerged in the 1960s. "Maybe more," he said.

By the end of this week, the individual sound, lighting, set and drama projects will combine and work together. The result will be a realistic, but dramatic, view inside the mind of a stroke victim.

Sound effects will accom-

pany 50 minutes of the 85-minute play. Portland sound engineer, Christopher Hartman, is composing this tape with the aid of College electronics students, Vince Maxian and Ron Petersen.

According to Hartman, most of the effects will convey the thoughts of the victim, Emily Stilson, before and after the stroke.

"This is the first time I had a chance to see what my ART-700 would do," Hartman commented.

The voice of Barbara Bragg, who portrays Stilson, is on the tape. Other sounds were composed with a synthesizer, plus some ingenuity.

For example, airplane noises were produced, after Hartman managed to dig up an old sound effects record.

Old-time radio nostalgia was revived when a flapping noise was created. "Jack and I stood in the hall around a microphone, flapping towels," Hartman explained.

Hartman's behind-the-scenes stage experience goes back to high school stage crews.

His more recent projects have included New York off-Broadway plays, such as "The Knack," and "Best Foot Forward."

Show business is prominent in Hartman's family. His famous sibling, David Hartman, hosts ABC's "Good Morning America" program.

The stage design for "Wings" is another large piece of the play.

Set designer Mark Wubbold said that "Wings" is an unusual project because it hasn't been performed many times. His stage set is original, in fact a "radical change from the Broadway design," he said.

"On Broadway, they used panels and mirrors," he said. His design is aimed to "get different qualities of light from silk, nylon and canvas."

According to Wubbold, his purpose is to convey the psychological contrast between "true reality" against Emily Stilson's "stroke reality."

According to the stage design, Stilson, while immersed in "stroke reality," is isolated. The world, doctors, nurses, and the hospital, to on behind her with a "kind of shadow effect."

As the play progresses and Stilson becomes more aware of the real world, "people will begin to come into her stroke space."

Wubbold, who is a professional set designer in Seattle, said "Wings" is a "hot new piece."

He said he heard about the College's challenging project, "wanted to get in on it," and consequently submitted a design.

Because the set, sound and cast will all carry equal weight during the performance, the credibility of each segment will be important.

After research, trial and error, conferences with stroke victims and hours of practice, they may be successful.

"A Man Called Horse," starring Richard Harris, will be shown in the Fireside Lounge Friday at noon. This film is sponsored by Student Activities and the history department.

The College's award-winning stage band will perform a tribute to the late jazz pianist, soloist, composer, talent scout and band leader, Stan Kenton, at the Civic Theater Friday at 7 p.m.

The stage band is directed by LeRoy Anderson. Admission is \$3 general and \$2 for students.

Tickets may be purchased at the door, or in advance at the music department office.

"Dr. Corn's Electric Grass Band" will provide music for bluegrass dancers and foot stompers at the College's Fourth Annual Hoedown, Saturday from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m.

Food and refreshments, including a beer garden, will be available.

Admission will be \$2 for College students and \$3 for non-students.

The proceeds from this event will support the Associated Student Government and the College Foundation.



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