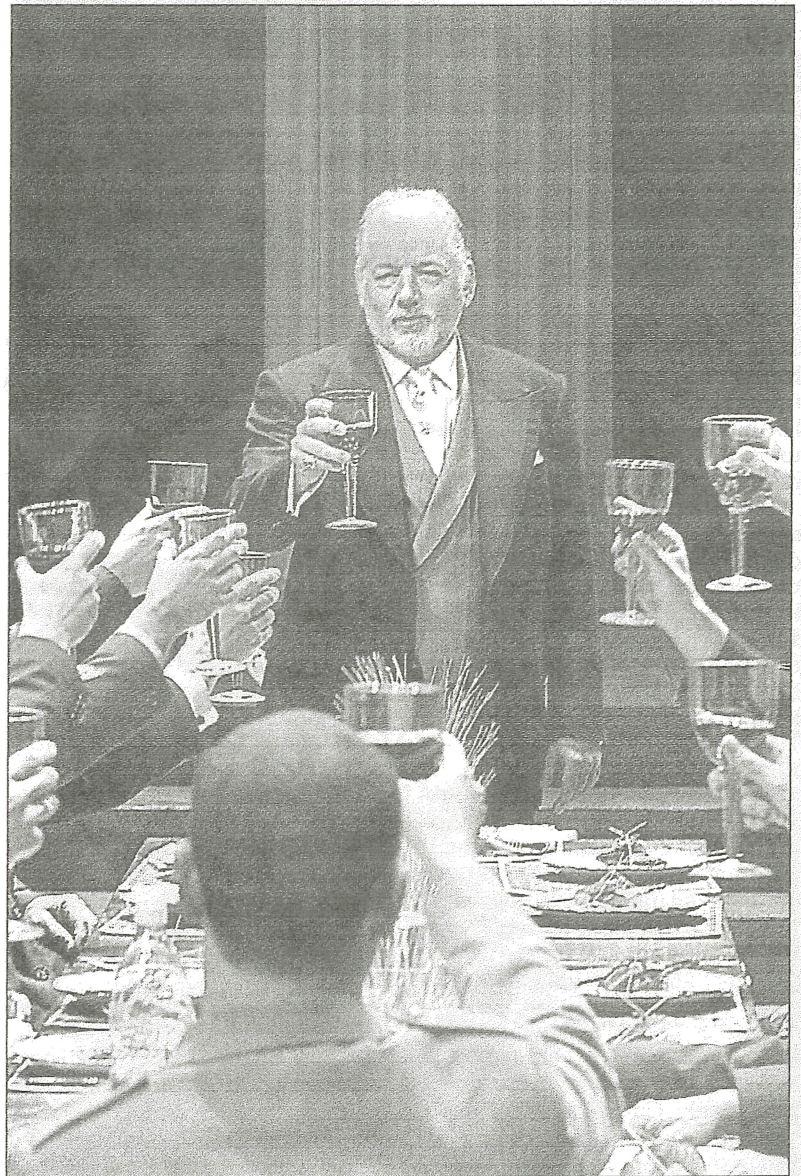
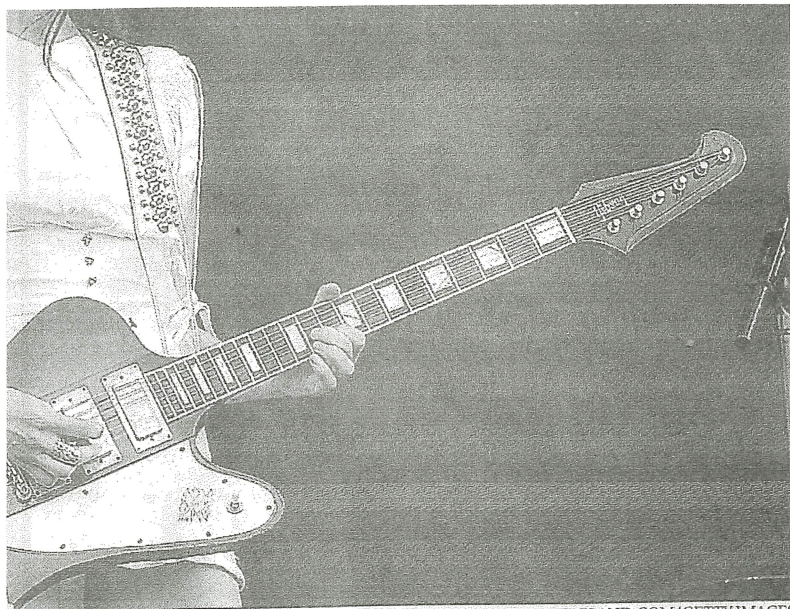


Beyond the beach and barbecue



DAVID HOU

Peter Donaldson is Timon in the Stratford Festival production of



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gantic outdoor music festival Aug. 5-6 in Toronto.

drift apart as nightfall and a storm come in.

In the big-budget category, I have hopes for *Collateral* (Aug. 6), because it's directed by Michael Mann (*Heat*, *The Insider*). The story follows a Los Angeles cab driver who is forced to spend a night driving a contract killer around from hit to hit. The killer is played by Tom Cruise, with his hair dyed grey. Mann is a terrific action director. He's also good with actors and may be a strong enough personality to get a real performance out of Cruise, who has become progressively more mannered as he ages. For Cruise, here's a chance to show his acting chops, like Denzel Washington in *Training Day*, by playing the villain.

— Liam Lacey

Video games

How eager are gamers to get their hands on *Half-Life 2*? Last fall, hackers stole the source code for the much anticipated first-person shooter from the company developing it, Valve Software. Siberian teens were said to be playing the game over the holidays, prompting Valve to push back its release date to this summer to prevent piracy.

The stakes are huge on this one. This is the title that is supposed to save PC gaming, which has seen sales dip over the past few years. The first *Half-Life* was the hit of 1998, winning unanimous praise for its game-play and graphics. The sequel, in tandem with the similar *Doom 3*, which should hit stores around the same time, has the makers of graphics cards drooling: You'll need a souped-up machine

to take advantage of its "rag-doll physics" game engine (geekspeak for things that blow up real good). If *Half-Life 2* is half as great as it looks, it will dominate summer gaming.

Another sequel is spreading its web wider — Activision is releasing *Spider-Man 2* on every gaming platform in existence at the end of this month to dovetail with the blockbuster movie. Word is the game combines web-slinging and voice-overs from the big-screen stars with the freedom of movement allowed in the Grand Theft Auto oeuvre. Movie tie-in games are notorious for being rushed and skinny on the fun, since the licence eats up so much of the development cash, but *Spider-Man 2* will have enough depth to stick around.

— Scott Colbourne

Jazz

Sure, the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal is going all out to celebrate its 25th year this summer. (It'll even have Elvis singing with Diana, according to rumour.) Edmonton's Jazz City is also turning 25, albeit less sensationally. And Toronto's Downtown Jazz is worthy of note because, well, it's in Toronto, and that's all that matters to Torontonians, right?

Note for note, though, and musician for musician, the *Vancouver International Jazz Festival*, June 25 to July 4, is still the place for the intrepid fan to be. The key word here is "intrepid." Faint hearts need not start packing. (Toronto's the place for them.) Of course, Vancouver has a few of the requi-

dance artists imported from Japan, Spain and the United States. Styles run the gamut from modern and punk, through hip-hop and flamenco, to aerial and ballet. The more lavish fundraising gala on Aug. 19 features four additional, and acclaimed, choreographers (David Earle, Yasmina Ramzy, Andrea Nann and Roberto Campa-nella) along with the regular Grand Scale programming. This eclectic and entertaining dance concert is one of the high points of the summer (416-214-9597, www.ffdada.org).

— Paula Citron

Television

Summer is normally a down time for television, but there's always room for more reality. The networks are using the slow summer months to test the next crop of reality-TV contenders. Some are sequels and some are retreads of other reality efforts. And some are just strange new additions.

Outback Jack (TBS, June 22): TBS's first entry into the reality realm revisits territory previously explored by *Joe Millionaire* and *The Bachelor*, except this time the territory is located in the Australian Outback. The concept follows 12 attractive American women who travel Down Under to meet a hunky bloke with hopes of marriage. Outback Jack dismisses the ladies one by one through a series of personality tests and gruelling physical challenges. Ain't love grand?

The Amazing Race 5 (CBS, July 6): Originating host Anderson Cooper has long since departed for CNN respectability, but the show must go on. *The Amazing Race* is more ambitious than most reality series: The format involves 11 two-person teams packed off on a series of adventures anywhere and everywhere in the world, which at least makes for some nice scenery. As with the first four seasons, the elaborate website component should be more interesting than the show itself.

Growing Up Gotti (A&E, Aug. 2): Give them points for originality — this new reality series chronicles the day-to-day life of Victoria Gotti, who is famous only for being the daughter of deceased mob capo John Gotti. Those expecting *The Sopranos* may be disappointed, though: Most of the show revolves around the single mother trying to raise three rambunctious teen males, which includes making lunches and conferences with high-school guidance counsellors.

— Andrew Ryan



site safe choices — piano legend Oscar Peterson, and singers pop Al Green, Aaron Neville, John Pizzarelli and Jane Monheit — and a sampling of the DJs and World Beat artists that have become de rigueur, for better or worse, at Canadian jazz festivals.

But — and here's where things get interesting — Vancouver casts its net wider, deeper and, defying the currents of corporate interest that tug at jazz these days, further ahead than any other festival in the country.

Consider the visionary figures who will be making multiple appearances in special projects and one-time-only partnerships: American trumpeters Dave Douglas and Herb Robertson, British saxophonist Evan Parker, Dutch violinist Ig Henneman, Italian trombonist Giancarlo Schiaffini and, as ever, stalwart Vancouver drummer Dylan van der Schyff. Parker alone will be heard in eight different settings; that's eight more than he'll be heard in anywhere else this summer in Canada. (Information: www.coastaljazz.ca/jazzfest2004 or 1-888-438-5200.)

— Mark Miller

Dance

In terms of attendance, contemporary dance has always been the poor orphan of the performing arts, so any concert that can attract both a dance and a non-dance audience is very welcome. The fFIDA International Dance Festival's exhilarating Grand Scale Event was created last year by fFIDA artistic director Michael Menegon to be a casual cabaret of dance where people could experience the art under non-threatening conditions. In fact, much of the debut audience turned out to be first-time dancers who thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The Grand Scale Event is the curated part of fFIDA, as opposed to