

Second City touring troupe invades SUB



Toronto based company cruises into SUB Thursday.

by Greg Harris

Newly renovated SUB Theatre gets its inaugural workout Thursday, October 22nd, when Second City Touring Company drops in for an evening of skits and improvisations.

The Toronto based company makes Edmonton the second stop on a six-city tour of Western Canada, and cast member Mike Myers says the troupe is looking forward to it.

"University audiences are usually quite good," Myers said in a long-distance telephone conversation from The Old Firehall offices in Toronto.

"Their age makes them a little more hip to things in youth culture, and they're at a higher reference level - they seem to catch most of the more intelligent jokes," he said.

Thursday's show will be broken into two sections. The first half features a series of sketches billed as the "Best of" the last ten years of Second City.

The second half of the show consists

entirely of improvisations - the company asks the audience for topic ideas prior to the intermission, uses the fifteen minute break to formulate a story line, and then takes to the stage to see what the dialogue might be.

"It's definitely the most fun part of the show and the most spontaneous," said Myers. "Audience expectation is lessened and there's more pressure on us... it's hard, but more fun."

The six-member troupe plays Red Deer October 21, and after playing SUB Theatre the following evening moves on to Calgary, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg.

The Touring company represents the third tier in the Second City Hierarchy: once an actor or actress has been accepted into improvisational workshops held at The Old Firehall, they're auditioned for a spot in the Touring Company. From there they can move up to join the resident company in Toronto, after which they have a shot at joining the SCTV television program.

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Woody Allen finds his groove with docu-comedy flick

Zelig
Gameau Theatre

Woody Allen has finally left behind the capricious fluff and mock-Swedish artiness of his previous films and gone straight to his destined milieu: the slightly more respectable realm of the bogus biopic.

Zelig purports to be a compilation of newsreels, home-movies and latter-day interviews describing the life of Leonard Zelig, also known as "The Human Chameleon" - he was well-known in the twenties as a medical curiosity, travelling freak, international celebrity, multiple bigamist, and transatlantic hero, but now almost completely forgotten.

Due to his incredibly difficult and brutish childhood as the son of Jewish immigrants working unsuccessfully in show business, he came to personify the most extreme application of the American Melting Pot ethic: he took on the physical and personal characteristics of any person he encountered so that he could totally assimilate, and not stand out in any way.

He's not always completely successful,

though, and is arrested for impersonating a Chinese opium smoker. This anti-eccentric eccentricity comes to the attention of the medical community and the newspapers, bringing on exactly what he wanted to avoid - notoriety and individual distinction.

Surrounded by brutality, venality, and callousness, he finds a true love who cures him, and so he rises above it all, even after he's exposed as a multiple fraud and joins a primitive European cult of anti-Semites.

This is not a movie for barbarians (no chain-saw murders), motorheads (no Trans-ams), hosers (no stupid-drunk beer gags), voyeurs (a complete lack of mattress testing), or someone who thinks Brick ads are subtle and understated. It's kind of like a movie based on a story by Vonnegut about *Bananas*' Fielding Mellish, with a plot by John Irving, and directed by Mel Brooks (without all his maniacal frenzy, and without Allen's self-conscious angst.) There's lots of laughs even so.

See it right away: it won't show on the television for a long time, and drive-ins are right out. More importantly, there aren't enough people with your well-developed sense of humour to keep it in the theatre for long.

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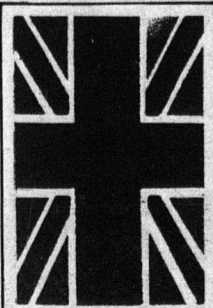
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