

Jello Biafra uber alles

Dead Kennedys
SNFU
Down Syndrome
Government of God
SportsWorld
October 25

review by Suzette C. Chan

It's so nice to see our young people having good clean fun, and learning all the while.

Just last Thursday about 750 socially aware young adults gathered at a roller rink for the hardcore happening of the year: a four-act evening featuring three local bands and a special guest group from San Francisco.

Most of the kids stayed away from Government of God, a new group of young committed musicians who play so slow they verge on heavy metal.

But some young skinheads started warming up for later acts when Down Syndrome took the stage. The Edmonton band has a crisp style and some pleasant melodies. Good thrashing for the youngfolk.

The third act on the bill was SNFU, whose members proved why they are Edmonton's hardcore heroes with energetic, nay, athletic performances of crowd favourites, including their hit, "Womanizer."

But the performance every young punk, poser, skinhead and music connoisseur was

waiting for took stage at about 11 p.m. San Francisco's Dead Kennedys were worth the wait.

The DKs look deceptively subdued. Their music is sharp, their lyrics sarcastic. People expecting a well-paced selection of ditties ranging from thrash to pop to fake jazz were satisfied, but the DKs gave more.

The Dead Kennedys sang about social injustices, political extremism and ignorance.

Every time the DKs softened the music to let singer Jello Biafra (who could blow away Mondale or Reagan in a debate) deliver pointed and persuasive analyses of U.S. intervention in Central America, cruise missile testing in Canada, right-wing fanatics, Ronald Reagan, Brian Mulroney, and the Vancouver Five, the crowd stopped to listen.

Like diligent socially conscious students, people stopped thrashing every time Jello gave a speech and listened with open ears and open eyes and open mouths. So nice to see our young people concerned about the human condition.

But the DKs are never condescending and they never lose their sense of humour. Jello sarcastically justified the murderous raid Sherbrooke RCMP made on an innocent carpet-layer ("what are you supposed to do when you have a gun and you're faced with a guy lying naked in bed?")



Photo Bill St. John

Jello's political polemics inspire lively discussion.

Always fair, Jello had the police in question sing their side of the story in "I Fought the Law and I Won."

Although generally irreverent (but always relevant) the band performed a handful of sure-fire hits, including "California Uber Alles" (I am emperor Ronald Reagan/born again with fascist cravings/still you made me

president) and "Nazi Punks Fuck Off," a song which is as close to an anthem as the DKs will allow themselves.

The evening over, our enlightened youth disbanded at midnight to head home on the LRT with visions of thrash and revolution in their heads.

Lemieux sparkles

by Suzette C. Chan

Michel LeMieux puts sparkles in the brain.

The hot new star from Montreal, who had a hit in Europe and New York as composer of LaLaLa Human Steps and has sold out concerts in Montreal, promises his concert on Thursday night will provoke and entertain.

"I propose a lot of things," says the singer/dancer/composer artist. "But they are really open; people can make their own interpretations, but there is not a better one."

Classified as a performance artist, LeMieux is often mentioned in the same breath as Laurie Anderson, but says his influences are mainly in the art world: surrealism, Dadaism and Russian avant garde.

LeMieux would rather be known for his originality than his reference points. "I have a lot of ideas for creation," he says. "I like to put my brain to work. That's the real sense of entertainment, not brainwashing."

LeMieux says he likes his audiences to "rediscover the curiosity and naivety they had as children."

With elaborate backdrops, disappearing props and intriguing lyrics and music, LeMieux should have no trouble putting sparkles into brains Thursday.

Tickets for Michel LeMieux are available at Bass outlets and there are plenty of good seats left.

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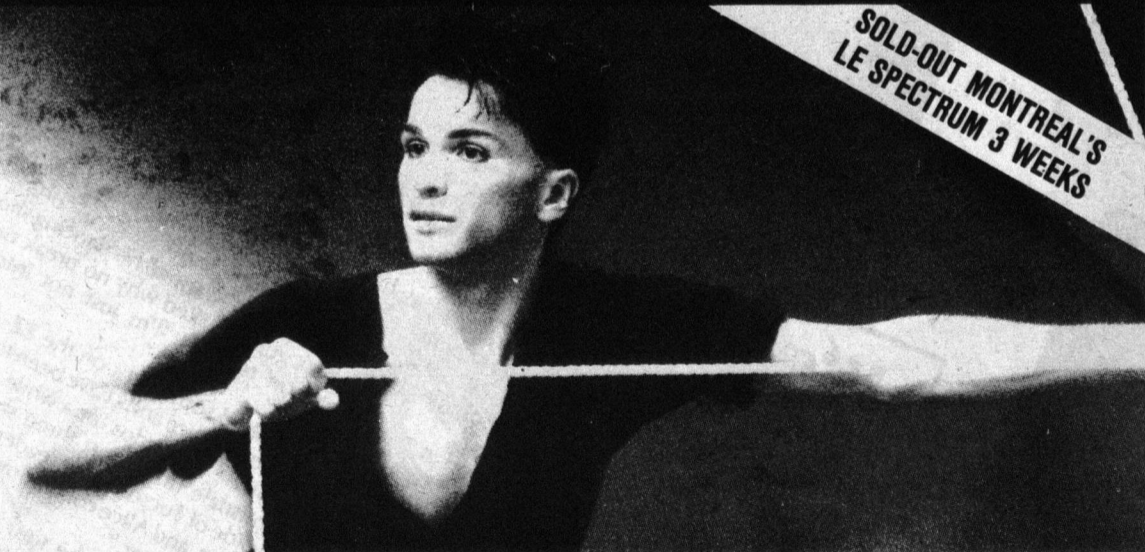
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