

Theatresports returns for another season of laughs

Theatresports
Rapid Fire Theatre at the Phoenix
Every Friday

by Grant N. Winton

When you hear the names "Archie Oggie Eye," "Dream of Wheat," "The Underwear Army," and "The Escape Goats," what comes to mind? Saturday morning kiddies cartoons, militant feminist groups, or teams in the inter-prison cosser league? No, these are actually the teams competing in this year's version of Theatresports, the improvisational theatre probably the best entertainment for the price that this city has to offer.

At last Friday's show, the audience was in stitches from the moment MC Don "King" Masson took the stage right through until a couple of 2-D men, played by Ben McCaffery and Jack Smith, who were meant to be acting out a story, mugged their storyteller, Andrew Kenny, for his inability to write.

Theatresports works as follows: two teams of three players each take the stage. The teams then take turns challenging each other to various "sports," which are themes that must be followed in the next sketches. A prime example is a space jump, which involves one person acting out a scene, freezing, and a second person coming on stage, looking at the position of the frozen person, and starting a scene on a totally different topic based on what it looks like the frozen person is doing. The initial topics are always supplied by the audience, and the teams are awarded

points from a panel of judges. The points are totalled up at the end of the contest to determine the overall winner.

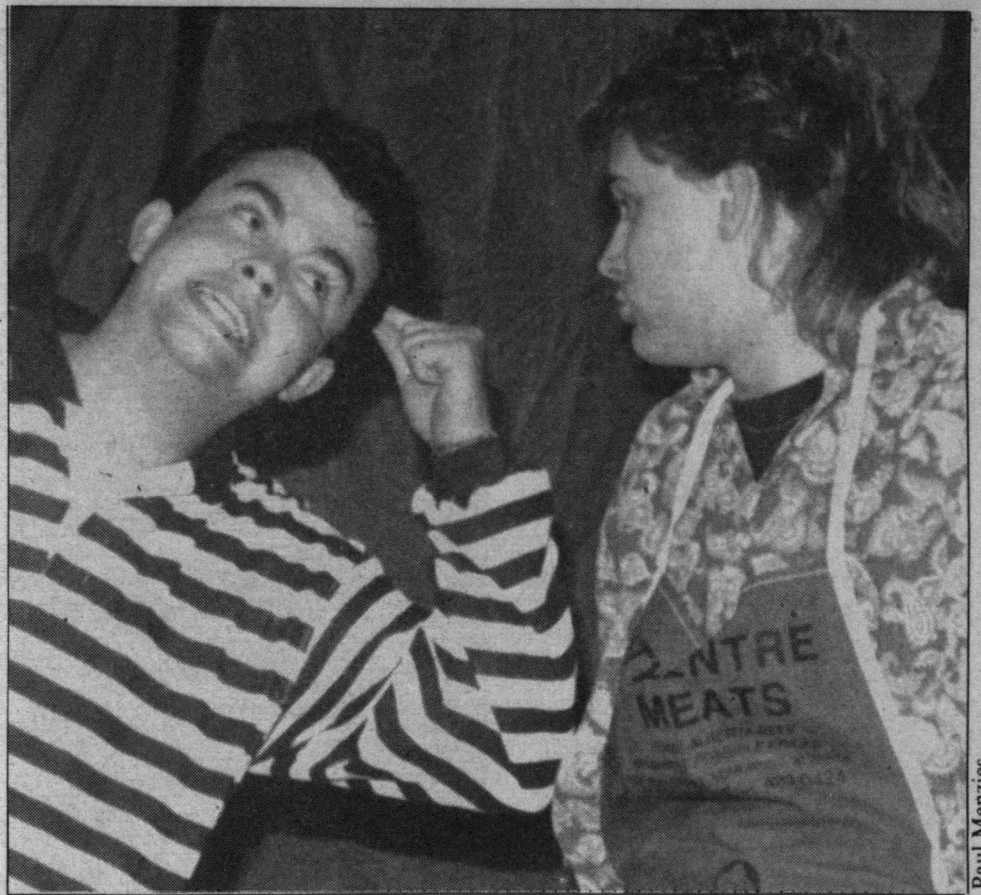
The events themselves are varied, including everything from an attempt to make the other team laugh to a remake of the book *The Most Dangerous Game*, which takes place in Vegreville, Alberta, and features the stone-faced Jack Smith as a murdering castle-owner, and Ben McCaffery as a lost farmer from St. Paul.

Audience involvement is an essential part of the show. The audience selects the topics for every skit, and on one occasion a girl in the audience was made to describe her most embarrassing incident, which was then reinterpreted and acted out by Christine Rootseart (as the girl), and Olivier Moreau (as a gruff, bitchy head cook at the Girl-Guide camp where the girl was working).

Another interesting piece of audience involvement came during a birthday party for Duke, played by Olivier Moreau, a prime example of the type of man your mother told you not to talk to as a child.

Just as Duke is lamenting to his only friend Byron (Paul Mather), that no-one came to his party, the entire audience started to sing "Happy Birthday." Duke, deeply moved, killed them all with a flame-thrower while playing his version of "pin the tail on the donkey."

The members of Rapid Fire Theatre, the group which performs Theatresports, also have a talent for getting themselves out of tight spots. When it seems obvious that a skit is running into trouble, the strange things begin to occur. For instance, Andrew Kenny plays the part of a Chip-



Paul Menzies

Two Theatresporters yuk it up as the season begins for Rapid Fire Theatre at the Phoenix.

pendale waiter to the hilt while serving Gary Nugent and his date Donovan Workun (who looked very ladylike despite his beard). Just as it looked like the skit was turning sour, Kenny doffed his clothes, and finished the skit in his underwear and a flowered apron. Another fine example was during the Underwear Army's Safari across the Sahara, featuring David Belke as the camel. The skit was dull and the actors were floundering when whom should the meet, but a lost farmer from St. Paul, and a murdering castle-owner from Vegreville.

Theatresports will be played again next Friday, September 23rd at 10 pm, at The Phoenix Downtown. Admission is five dollars. The next production will be a dinner-theatre version of the sport, on September 29, 30, and October 1 at 8 pm at the Pickwick Theatre Restaurant. In late October or early November, the group will be back at the Phoenix, dates to be announced.

For ticket information for the dinner theatre, call 424-8982. If you would like to learn a little more about Rapid Fire Theatre, call Olivier Moreau at 474-5964.

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