



Sherlock Holmes: The Curse of the Sign of Four, based on the novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is at Neptune Theatre until October 25.

Photo: G. GEORGAKAKOS

Neptune provides gossamer entertainment in a

Melodramatic Maze

By Ellen Reynolds

Mystery got lost in the labyrinth but Sherlock Holmes and his cronies still provided gossamer entertainment in *Sherlock Holmes: The Curse of the Sign of Four*.

Neptune's season opener is a light piece of melodrama mixed with a characteristic Sherlock Holmes maze-like plot. The result is slightly disjointed when the melodrama is interrupted by long-spun elucidations of the plot by Mary Morstan, by the peg-toed sea captain, and by Holmes himself.

In last season's *Dracula*, melodrama was rampant and the play was hilarious, but this version of Sherlock Holmes, as the intricate plot unravels, attempts also to be serious and mysterious. The result is a mixture that doesn't exactly induce sleep, but neither does it show the intrigue which is characteristic of our illustrious sleuth.

Graham MacPherson played Dr. Watson as a rather rambunctious and jolly fellow, who, although divergent from the traditional character, was a sterling contrast to Michael Keating's wimpy portrayal of Sherlock Holmes. Thaddeus Sholto, the wealthy East Indian, and Holmes' infamous rival, Prof. Moriarty, were both played by Maxim Mazumdar, who transformed from the flighty Sholto with his eye-smarting clothing to evil personified as Moriarty.

A romance between Watson and Mary M., reminiscent of a silent movie, with flashing eyes and gushing sentimentality was a humorous sub-plot consistent to the end.

The sets were elaborate, especially the Baker St. apartment, where Holmes and Watson were indubitably at home. Some scene changes were incorporated into the melodrama, which was a novel idea, but five changes added to the general confusion.

The play, in all, didn't reach out and grab me, but it was mildly entertaining for those people, like me, with a penchant for the melodramatic.

The Sattalites provide

Rare Reggae

by Scott Neily

The Sattalites, a reggae band from Toronto, played last week at the Middle Deck. I saw the Sattalites on Monday and though I'm far from a reggae fan, I greatly enjoyed their music. Their tunes have an original sound, partly because of the interracial and diverse musical backgrounds of the band members, but also because the band is simply very good. With frontman Fergus Hambleton and co-leader, near-legend Jo-Jo Bennet, they per-

formed top-notch reggae-style cover versions of the Beatles' "She Loves You" and Katrina & the Waves' "Walking on Sunshine", which also gave their music an edge of accessibility. One of their own tunes, "China Doll", was a particular favourite of mine. Their Jamaican-flavoured music and performance has a hard-to-describe hypnotic quality that has to be heard and seen to be fully enjoyed. Those unfortunates who missed their show will just have to make an extra effort to catch them next time.

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