



Sheena, Prince and Cat sing to the flick of Bics

## Prince — sex to the beat

Prince: *Sign "O" The Times*  
Cineplex Odeon Films  
Cinema 6, Plaza

review by Jerome Ryckborst

Hey you! You like sex-to-the-beat? Go see *Sign "O" The Times*!

Oh, you want more? Well... Let me see. *Sign "O" The Times* is a concert movie, as in Prince (the short little sleazy-singing guy in eccentric clothes and four inch high heels) and the Revolution (the big belting mamas and fast-dancing backup band).

You will see Prince's entire *Sign "O" The Times* album performed live, in Rotterdam, before a huge audience who all flick their bic to the beat. The beat is fast, and that's a lot of flicking.

Rotterdam is in Holland, and it is no accident that *Sign "O" The Times* was filmed there. Dutch audiences are renowned for their critical liveliness. Musicians who put on a good show are showered in appreciation; those who don't, aren't.

Prince is the world's best live entertainer. The man is very aware of his image. In everything he does he always portrays himself as a musician. In *Sign "O" The Times*, the instruments are all over the stage; so Prince is all over the stage. All over the dancers too. Hell, you'll see him take a running start, slide between Cat's legs and somehow end up with her miniskirt between his teeth. Says he, pointing to Cat: "Do you want her?" The audience: YES! flick-flick-flick to the beat.

What's good about this film: we get to see

Prince up close. A chance to see how he feels about what he sings. The facial expressions, the exchanges between the band members, the stuff you don't see from back of some stadium. You get to see the holes cut in unusual places in Sheila E's leotard and Prince's pants. Prince plays a mean guitar — fingers flying over the frets, and the camera zoomed in right on top.

What's bad about this film: Sheena Easton. The woman can't dance. She can't look sleazy, she can't look sensual. Her big claim to fame is winning the Eurovision Festival six years ago (*My baby* takes the "Morning Train", he works from nine to five and then....) Fortunately she's only on for one tune: "You got the look" — Ha!

*Sign "O" The Times* is more than just Prince. This film has some wild jazz musicians who play Charlie Parker as well as Prince's own work.

This film has Boni Boyer. Boni's big and black, and she belts out her solos like *stand aside, freight train* comin' through.

This film has Cat, a lean mean dancing machine. She rides up and down on a heart-shaped bed, rattles a few cages and wiggles up and down a lot. She sings too. (Eat your heart out Sheena).

And best of all, Sheila E. beats up her drum set. Sheila E. is tough.

You know what? You may not like this film. This is no *Purple Rain*. This film has no plot, no dialogue. It's just music. As with any live concert, you'll enjoy it more if you know the tunes. And if this were a live concert, you'd all be born-again funk fans.

## Life after war for an Unknown Soldier

George Payerle  
*Unknown Soldier*  
MacMillan of Canada

review by Don Trembath

George Payerle's portrayal of a soldier's life when he is no longer a soldier offers disturbing insight into life after war. Payerle depicts what civilization is like for someone who is neither prepared to return nor able to forget the horrors experienced on the battlefield. Sam Collister is the hero of *Unknown Soldier*. He spent six years dodging death, protecting his men and killing the enemy. He returned to Canada when he was twenty-five with a young bride and an eagerness to live a normal life. His fighting days were over. His days of living beneath a blanket of fear, pain, anger and death were over. But his war was not over.

The novel begins in Belgium. Sergeant Collister has just led his men through a bloody battle with the Germans. His foot was shot, but his mission was successful. Then the setting switches to Vancouver. A much calmer environment, but the one in which Payerle focuses his novel. He changes Sam Collister's battle grounds from the foggy eeriness of Belgium to the city streets and hotel bars of a beautiful Canadian city. The novel is not about the war between Germany and the Allies, but rather the war that every veteran must deal with, the war that lingers within the mind. This war involves memories of agonizing deaths of friends, tortuous killings of the enemy, endless frantic nightmares and the realization that all of the gallantry exhibited before means little now.

During a ferry ride to Victoria to visit a friend, Sam encounters a slick youth wearing an Iron Cross around his neck. He is enraged by the attitude of the "chesty dude" and loses his cool when he sees the cross: "This thing used to be worn by guys who went out to get shot at by guys like me." Then he starts a fight.

This incident symbolizes the frustration that Sam endures, and therefore the message that Payerle wishes to convey. The memory of the war is so clear to Sam that the instant he sees the cross he remembers sighting in on human targets, shooting to kill. He does not like the memory, but he cannot free himself of it. This is essentially the theme of the novel: a man's brutal fight to forget the haunting memories of war.

Through other characters, Payerle emphasizes the devastating effects of this psychological battle. Hugh, Sam's son, grew up never knowing his father and then not understanding him when they meet. Then there is Effie, a drunken widow whose husband was a war veteran who talked continuously about tanks. Sam blames her for her husband's death because she could not relate to his stories. Sam's wife Dot loses him because of his problems adjusting to civilian life, and ends up with a pushy capitalist for a husband.



The memory that burdens Sam more than any other is that of his friend Hugh, after whom his son was named, who was killed during a fierce battle. His death alone would have been hard on Sam, but Hugh's girlfriend had managed to sneak out to the battle field soon after he died. For Sam, the love that she displayed and the anguish in her eyes when he refused to let any of his men bury Hugh is too vivid to forget. She then performed an act that Sam remembers daily. He has recurring nightmares about this event in his life. It mars his relationship with his son and confuses Lily, the woman he meets and with whom he falls in love.

Payerle's novel has impact. His style includes brief pieces of descriptive prose which definitely paint a clear picture of warfare. "The rifleman Sims is covered in Halldorson's brains and screaming like a stuck pig with his hands buried in his stomach and puke all over his boots. Phillips is shiny red as a slaughterhouse, firing the blood-slimy Bren." Intermingled with such passages (not all are that gory) are sharp, terse sentences that jump from one thought or action to another. The dialogue, however, becomes a little tiresome at times and Sid, Dot's new husband, is a slightly unrealistic character.

But the novel is a good one. Very good. Payerle has provided yet another reason to abolish warfare, and to find other methods to resolve conflicts between countries. War does not end when the soldier goes home. Nor are the effects of the war only felt by the soldier himself. Others are affected as well.

The book ends on a happy note. Sam finds some peace with himself and his son and he seems ready to live the life that he thought he would live years earlier when he returned to Canada. Whether or not this ending happens to real soldiers is debatable, but it is a nice way to end the novel, with hope.

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