



... ARTS

A fairy tale spectacle . . .

## Coppelia is a sensory feast

by Lia Marsman

Coppelia  
O'Keefe Centre

Some people shy away when they hear the word "ballet". They seem to think this genre belongs to a restricted club of snob intellectuals. Even if there were some truth to this assumption, the ballet *Coppelia* would dissipate it, showing how this art form can appeal to everyone.

Leo Delibes' lively musical score, Maurice Strike's colourful set and costume design and Erik Bruhn's choreography, all contribute to make *Coppelia* a scintillating spectacle, a happy medley of dance, theatre, folk tunes and mime acting.

The ballet tells the story of Swanilda (Kim Lighthouse) and Franz (Raymond Smith), a young peasant couple engaged to be married. But Franz falls for the china blue eyes of a beautiful girl sitting behind a window who, in reality, is only a mechanical doll created by master toy-maker Dr. Coppelius.

Needless to say, Swanilda is less than happy about this development and when she, by accident, finds the key to Dr. Coppelius' workshop, she decides to take a closer look at her rival, thus discovering her mechanical nature.

Franz, finding the door to the workshop open, also decides to pay a visit to this enchanting girl who stole his heart. Dr. Coppelius catches him red-handed and gives him a potion to make him sleep. The good doctor then proceeds, following an old recipe in his book of magic, to steal the boy's soul and transfer it to the beautiful doll to bring her to life.

Swanilda, who was hiding in the workshop, decides to play for time until her lover can work off the drug and escape the dangerous doctor.

She dons the doll's attire and pretends to come to life to the great joy of Dr. Coppelius. As soon as Franz awakens, she abandons the pretence of being Coppelia the doll, and the two escape leaving behind a raving mad Coppelius. They then proceed, amid bucolic festivities, to tie the knot.

This delightful romantic comedy takes place in a little village somewhere in the Balkans and the rural community is brought to life by folk dances, czardas and mazurkas.

This lesser known composer uses music as his contemporaries, the Impressionist painters, used color: in a lively sense, using his rich orches-

**Master toy-maker Dr. Coppelius**

**(Jacques Gorrissen) jumps**

**for joy after discovering that**

**his doll has**

**come to life**



tration to describe the action, merely to accompany it.

The music combined with rich costumes, a fairy-tale setting and the vivacious performance of the

dancers, amounts to a dazzling evening of musical entertainment.

*Coppelia*, a feast for the senses, will be performed at the O'Keefe Centre until March 6.

## Punch & grab outfit meets rock legend

by J. Wilson

**Social Distortion/Sonic Youth/Neil Young & Crazy Horse**  
*The Ragged Glory Tour:*  
Copps Coliseum & Maple Leaf Gardens

When I heard what the lineup would be for this tour, my first thought was that it was a mistake. A radio DJ had got his press release sheets confused. Yeah, that's it, that's the ticket. But it wasn't. This was actually happening. Not once but across the North American continent. So I bought my tickets and went.

Social Distortion were, in case you don't already know, a pretty intense punch and grab hardcore outfit in the early 80s.

Times have changed however, and Social Distortion have a sound that is older, harder and a few chords leaner. Their blues and rockabilly tinged hard rock went over well with the early arrivals at both shows. Social Distortion's set also provided great soundtrack music for finding your seat before the big concert, as well as hinting at the color of Neil Young's show. More on that later.

Sonic Youth, distant cousins of Neil Young's brand of guitar harshness and quiet dissonance, played a tight set of their shorter songs coming mostly from their latest album. Interjected were chunks of intense sonic noise as well as a burning rendition of "Kill Yr. Idols."

The hardline (read: hardheaded) Neil Young fans in Hamilton did not like what they heard. The crowd's boos and curses between Sonic Youth's songs were drowned out with blistering-loud interjections of Karen Carpenter songs.

Sonic Youth ended the set with a curtain of buzzing feedback that lasted longer than the finale song itself.

I have some sympathy for those Neil Young fans that did not know what to make of guitarists Lee Renaldo and Thurston Moore bashing, kicking and throwing their guitars around on stage, breaking strings and overloading amplifiers. It was insane, juvenile, indulgent, and . . . beautiful, like heaven on a sunny day.

An actual overheard quote from a thirtysomething woman sitting behind me: "I don't get it. It was just noise. All they did was make noise." O.K., onto Neil Young.

Neil Young's show was pretty much the same on both nights, though the much larger, sold out

crowd at the Gardens seemed to fuel Young.

He let rip with a handful of untamed solos that scorched like napalm in a desert, which Young did not play at Copps Coliseum, much to the delight of the fans at the Gardens I'm sure.

Young's major downfall however was a definite lack in sound and song variation.

Many of the songs came off sounding the same. The shuffle and nod feel of "Cinnamon Girl" got lost in the crushing decibels of the sound system, making it more of an anthem at a rally rather than a love song.

I was glad Neil Young didn't even attempt to play "Southern Man" or "Down by the River." I would have hated to see these rock songs turned into ROCK SONGS. Every song was belted out in true arena rock fashion; loud, hard and driving.

Neil Young started his show with the Star Spangled Banner and a ceremonious tying of the yellow ribbon around a nine meter tall microphone stand. Not what I would expect from a native Canadian on tour in Canada, but what the hell? "O Canada" would sound pretty shitty on guitar anyway. It's a free country right?

Neil Young kept a distance between himself and his audience, only opening his mouth to sing.

Basically he came out and rocked a whole lot, the only slowing of pace being early on in the show: a crisp rendition of "Blowin' In The Wind" with each timely lyric receiving clear pronunciation.

If Neil Young is interested in making any kind of political statement this time around he's doing it quietly.

The show was virtually free of pretense and flash, relying on Neil Young's honest, hard working rock style to hold it together.

People involved with the tour claim Neil Young is very down to earth and in control of the commercial machine around him. If this is true, he seems to be playing his political hand slowly, letting little things slip by to let you know what he's thinking. A peace flag here, a stressed word here and like, hey, Greenpeace is on this tour too, with tables set up along side the T-Shirt vendors and concession stands.

Political posturing doesn't work these days (did it ever?), and a more subliminal approach is at work here.

I sure hope Mr. Young saw the "Neil Young for Prime Minister" banners waving around. God Bless Canada.



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