

ENTERTAINMENT

Salad satisfies

Michel Lemieux
SUB Theatre
November 2

review by Suzette C. Chan

Burning shadows onto screens, animating slide shows, and conversing with robots when he wasn't singing, dancing, or playing synthesizers, Michel Lemieux dazzled an unsuspecting crowd of 500 with his one-man magic show, *Solide Salade*.

With first impressions resting on one limited edition single and an alluring poster, most of the audience Thursday night didn't know what to expect from the Montreal entertainer.

But Lemieux achieved his goal of filling his audience with a sense of wonderment.

Lips parted in amazement when Lemieux, clad in a suit of white geometric shapes, stepped in front of a screen onto which op-art designs were projected. As Lemieux moved, the images seemed to move in 3-D.

And heads shook in disbelief when Lemieux "burned" his designs on a glow-in-the-dark sheet, and when he blocked the intense light with his body to leave an imprint on the sheet.

And people giggled in amazement when Lemieux struck up a dialogue with a domes-

tic robot and when he introduced a keyboard to a tape machine.

But the user-friendly Lemieux was not entirely caught up in technoflash. Lemieux's stage presence was strong enough to carry the show except in a couple of spots where numbers ran long.

Lemieux was accompanied by a pre-recorded, multi-textured and vocally complex music, most of which was written or co-written by Lemieux.

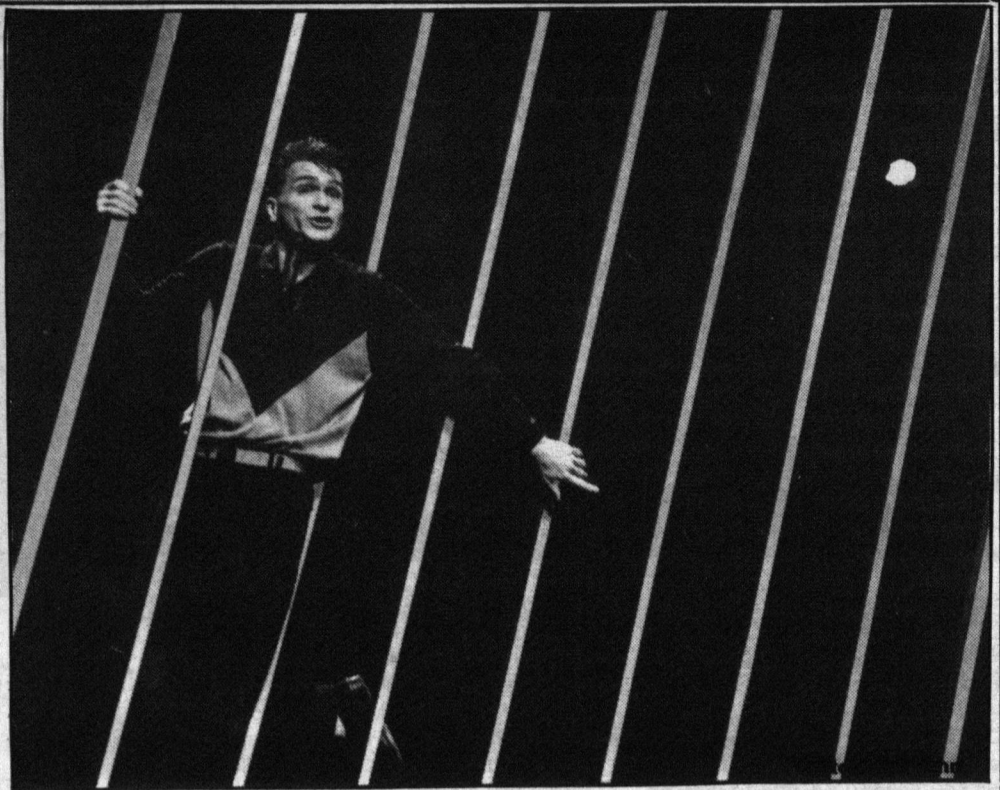
His dancing was not aggressively athletic, but his movements were calculated and contorted, usually expressive and often seductive.

Lemieux's voice matches his velvety, sometimes quirky music. He demonstrated a resonant high register Rikki Turofsky would be jealous of.

Lemieux also found time to play around with an electronic drum and a Casio and to deliver an intense synclavier performance.

Lemieux's unique theatre is not fake high-brow or pretentious. According to plan, he charmed the audience into rediscovering their childhood capacity for wonderment and amazement.

As Lemieux himself says, "Sometimes people say my show is like magic."



Michel Lemieux (above and below left) lives up to his promise, dazzling audience with his multi-media performance.

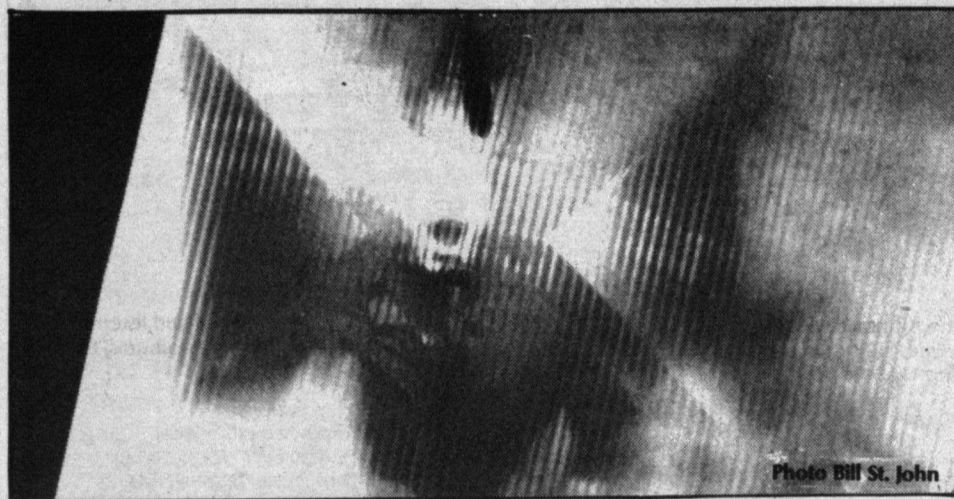


Photo Bill St. John

Poetry in the trenches

... *Not About Heroes*
Northern Light Theatre
Walter Kaasa Theatre
through Nov. 11

review by Mike Evans

Northern Light Theatre's current production of ... *Not About Heroes* is an affecting examination of the impact of war and of the bonds formed between men of common temperament. It is the story of the friendship between Sigfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, and the poetic development of the latter under the guidance of the former. But it is also a story with a strong anti-war statement, with specific reference to the Great War.

The play opens in 1917 in Craiglockhart Hospital. Owen has been sent to Craiglockhart by his C.O. for treatment of a nervous disorder which could simply be disguised fear. Sassoon, already a distinguished poet and a decorated soldier, has been committed to Craiglockhart to recover from a "mental breakdown" which caused him to publish works with an anti-war sentiment. The two meet through the hospital paper, and a strong friendship arises despite their disparate backgrounds.

Sassoon guides Owen through the rite of poetic passage, from a naive heavy-handed amateur to a sensitive and subtle chronicler of truth.

The play is also fascinating in its exploration of the darker undercurrents of man.

Owen's pacifist beliefs are deftly contrasted with his overwhelming need to return to the trenches, to be recognized as a soldier so that his poetry will have greater significance. In the end, his pursuit of the war experience cuts Owen's gift short; he is killed one week before Armistice Day.

Owen is played by Robert Wisden, an '84 graduate of the BFA acting program here at the U of A. This is the best work he has shown Edmonton audiences. Geoffrey Saville-Read plays the older Sassoon, also with conviction and touching honesty. The relationship between Owen and Sassoon grows under the careful guidance of Wisden and Saville-Read, until the affection they have for one another is nearly tangible. And both are to be commended for their rendering of the poetry. There are, however, moments when, as the intensity is internalized, more volume would be appreciated.

Robin Ayles, responsible for costume and set design, has again produced a masterpiece. She is fast becoming one of the most talented designers in the city.

Van der Veen's direction is simple and adds to the impact of *Heroes*. He uses the many levels provided by Ayles effectively and keeps a loving but restraining hand on the performances of his actors.

... *Not About Heroes* closes the night of Remembrance Day, and is part of Edmonton's anti-Nuclear Week festivities. It is also excellent theatre.

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Photo Tim Kubash

Poetry and warfare clash in ... *Not About Heroes*.