

**I Love You. Baby Blue is uneven**

**Revue trips from light highs to cheap lows**

By WARREN CLEMENTS  
I Love You, Baby Blue is decidedly a parochial show.

Not only does it draw its impetus from CITY-TV's Baby Blue Movie, but half the skits centre around Yonge Street's massage parlours and strip shows.

It is a show which would bomb anywhere except in downtown Toronto. And even there, only the

fine ensemble acting enables the audience to react favourably to the frequently uneven revue.

Proceeding from its initial assumption that the 68 per cent of the Toronto viewing audience who switch on the Blue Movie do so because of (drum-roll, please) sex, the Theatre Passe Muraille troupe spends the evening exploring all kinds of sexual interaction.

We see a spoof of the mindless nonplot of a skin flick. We wince at the intentionally unamusing monologue by the barker who calls out the strippers. And we witness a swarm of individuals alternately talking about, slobbering over and pawing at one another.

Much of the evening is funny, and a good part of the humour involves reversing stereotyped sexual roles: a

couple of women on the make try to hustle a guy in a bar; a beefy male stripper named Frank, wearing dark glasses, rips the buttons off his trousers with a switchblade and tosses them to the shrieking audience.

But many of the jokes soon start to repeat themselves. After all, how many times can you parody the attitude of a sex-obsessed moron and come up with something new?

And several sketches, played straight and obviously designed to startle the audience into swallowing its laughter with a pang of awareness, do little more than confuse and disrupt the mood.

There is, for instance, a violent and melodramatic scene in which two motorcycle gorillas rape a lesbian, who tries to verbalize her resultant identity crisis to the audience. The bewildered audience chuckled throughout at Saturday night's show, and their reaction, odd as it may seem, pin-pointed the main problem with I Love You, Baby Blue.

When the only thread running through a show is a theme as general

as that of sex, the sketches lose any real connection with each other, and have to stand on their own merits. So it is that when an actress gives a serious (and gory) five-minute talk on self-administered abortions to an audience which has just roared with laughter at a relatively harmless skit, the effect is that of a very cheap shot.

A show with a framework so loose as to be non-existent can not expect to get away with sporadic blackouts which drag with them a heavy and important moral. If the point is worth making — such as the often ugly consequence of casual sex — it is worth taking the care to put that point in a careful perspective, rather than tossing it in haphazardly with dozens of other skits, some funny, some acid and some banal.

The Theatre Passe Muraille currently works out of the Bathurst Church, on Bathurst one block south of Bloor. Baby Blue has an indefinite run, Wednesday to Sunday at 8:30 p.m.; admission is \$3, except for Friday and Saturday, when they ask for \$4. Sunday at 2:30 p.m. is pay-what-you-can.

**Laura Dean loses keen audience**

By AGNES KRUCHIO  
George Bernard Shaw once said that the primary characteristic of a good critic is the ability to hate.

This reviewer may finally be making the grade.

Far be it from me to undermine the artistic integrity of any performer. But in return I would expect that the performer will, in fact, present something that I, the viewer, can respect as the product of much work, and that offers me the chance to get into it and explore it. The scant performance offered by the Laura Dean Dance Company, appearing at Burton last Thursday

night, offered very little in that regard.

Most of the performance consisted of simple patterns of movement, faintly reminiscent of a North American Indian idiom. These movements were repeated and repeated until they became hypnotic, and then repeated some more until they became boring. Their catalogue of movements consisted of rhythmic stamping of the feet (one of the dances was, in fact, named The Stamping Dance, because it consisted of just that); movements taken out of a child's repertoire — whirling around until dizzy, running in circles; occasional clapping; draping costumes (long, loose pants and skirts), all white; and nothing else.

After the stark, simple patterns, repeated up to 10 minutes at a time, one would have expected a burst of colorful, lively creativity in the second half of the performance — but nothing else was forthcoming.

Granted, to the extent that the performers moved, their motion was precise, well-coordinated, and clock-work accurate, and betrayed much training, as did the dancers' biography in the programme notes. Their precision, however, only left the audience with an even bleaker spectacle.

I may be labelled a raving reactionary, but is it so much to ask that the "dance" I'm presented with have music and creative movement? There is something terribly autistic about the Laura Dean dances, the one-track orientation and the limited nature of the company's repertoire. Autism may be a valid human experience, but it is not something one would deliberately impose on oneself.

**Stan Brakhage expands cinema**

Stan Brakhage, internationally respected pioneer of the experimental film medium, will present his new works and partake in a discussion with the audience on Tuesday (Jan. 28). The free retrospective, presented by the film department as part of its Expanded Cinema series, begins at 7 p.m. in Curtis LH-1.

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