

arts

Tennessee Williams plays cat's cradle at Neptune

by Jennifer Beck

I had high expectations when I went to Neptune Theatre to see *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams. I'm afraid my expectations had no specific form or focus but I can attest that they were very high.

Neptune Theatre
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
January 8 to 31

The play started off slowly with the broad Southern accent of Maggie, played by Caroline Gillis, assaulting a full house of frozen Northerners to little effect. This lack of reaction was roughly paralleled by her husband

Brick, stoically played by Ted Atherton. I began to fear that this was it, three acts of Maggie strutting around in her slip, desperately trying to arouse Brick from his drunken lethargy to lash out with any reaction at all. I decided both of them were overacting. I considered leaving at intermission (not seriously though).

The set was a gauzy recreation of a

room in a Southern plantation manor house, complete with a big brass bed hung with mosquito netting. Every single member of the cast flung themselves on that bed at least twice, and in the case of Maggie, maybe thirty times. No one could keep their hands off it! I swear, it looked like nobody knew what to do with their hands, so they fondled the bed or pulled themselves around by hanging off it. That prop will be a heap of toothpicks by the end of the run.

Maybe, just maybe, the point of these self-induced bedsores was to illustrate graphically how the hidden passions of the family members were roiling near the surface of their genteel Southern lives. For this was a passionate show, full of fireworks and lightning, with subplots of homosexuality judged too risqué for public consumption when the play was incarnated as a movie starring Eliza-

beth Taylor and Paul Newman so many years ago.

The second act saw the introduction of the larger than life characters Big Mama and Big Daddy, played by Marguerite McNeil and Jack Belt. The rest of the family also reached the stage at this point, and I found that this interaction created a much better atmosphere for developing the plot(s).

Altogether (and without giving too much of the story away), I felt the play was well done, dynamic and moving and surprisingly funny and tender without degenerating into sappiness. The performers gave their all in the opening night show, and time will only allow the cast to become more comfortable with the characters they play. I recommend that one and all go see this (don't bother renting the movie, go straight to the source).

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"Boom" goes another year

by Geoff Ineson

My love affair with the Hook's music began about three years ago. I was slightly intoxicated (shopping for my tombstone), and stumbled into a SAM'S. I ended up on the jazz/blues floor. I guess, somehow, I figured that blues music was the only salvation that I had left. I sobered up eventually and discovered that what I had bought was actually half-bad. Shortly thereafter, blues guitarist John Lee Hooker soon became a favourite for the stereo.

Of course, three years later, I was exhilarated to hear of the 1992 release of some more songs by this artist that has long since become an icon for great contemporary musicians. And I am indeed proud to tote that the Hook's music has matured better than most French wine does.

As with his last two albums, *The Healer* and *Mr. Lucky's*, John Lee Hooker has some first rate sell-outs backing him up. Robert Cray plays guitar; Charlie Musselwhite on harmonica; Deacon Jones on organ; and Jimmy Vaughan appears courtesy of Epic Associated Records, and others.

The title track, "Boom Boom", is a revision of a simply transplendid



1961 song. Most may remember the Hook from the Blues Brothers movie, or may have heard his recent soundtrack for the Lee jeans company. Anyway, you should try to catch these slow variations on the blues theme, some very slow, and one very hip "Boogie At Russian Hill". He's bad (like Jesse James), and it's sometimes nice to know that you're not alone in being alone.

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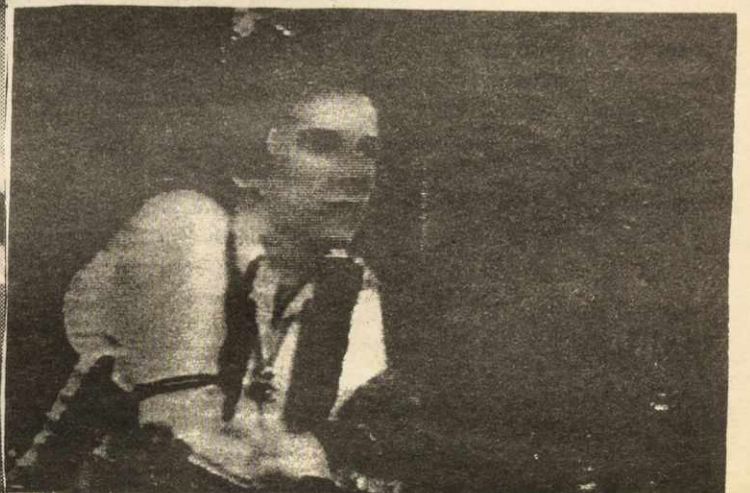
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Johnny Rotten contemplates the circus which the Sex Pistols had become. They went up in flames that night in San Francisco, Jan 14, 1978