



Sykes and Jacques deliver evening of typical British.

Sykes carries on

by Eric Simpson

Eric Sykes was greeted with warm applause when he first staggered on to the stage at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium for the comedy-variety show "A Hatful of Sykes". The fact that the applause had not abated when the curtain fell was a tribute to the consummate ability of this seasoned comic actor.

The evening was filled with typical British humour—wry and dry—and the audience, obviously Sykes admirers, enjoyed every minute of it.

Eric Sykes and Hattie Jacques, stars of "Sykes", the BBC's longest running domestic comedy series, did not show any signs of tedium. On the contrary, they exhibited a fresh rapport with each other and with the audience. Sykes endeared himself to the audience with repeated ad lib lines and direct, cutting banter which incorporated references to local affairs. In between remarks about John Neville and Stephenville, Newfoundland, Sykes showed an uncanny aptitude for inspiring enthusiasm from all those present—the mark of a truly experienced professional.

Certainly Sykes is no budding amateur. Although his face shows signs of age he is

still spry and full of vigor. This is an accomplishment in itself considering that Sykes began his career in 1947 with Frankie Howard before he moved on to write comedy for the "Goons" show and star in the popular "What's My Line" series and the famous film "Those Magnificent Young Men in Their Flying Machines". Sykes began his own television serial in 1959.

Hattie Jacques, Sykes' rotund TV sister and "straight lady", began her career in 1947 and has appeared in 16 "Carry On" films as well as the Canadian television show "The Pig and Whistle".

"A Hatful of Sykes" follows the lines of a "Sykes" TV show as Eric falls in and out of trouble and Hattie and Eric's close friend Constable Corky Turnbull (Derek Gulyer) alternately help and hinder him. Eric returns from an army reunion to discover he has become engaged to an attractive young lady—without realizing what he has done. The remainder of the show is spent in an attempt to extricate him from his predicament.

Eric shows great compassion for his pet goldfish—actually a dead carrot—and he

enjoys talking to the boiler in the basement but he still has trouble convincing his fiancée that he is slightly 'ga-ga'. However on the day of the marriage, dressed in a grey morning coat and looking like "Whistler's mother in drag", he learns that he has been deceived—his fiancée (April Walker) has become engaged to him in order to win a wager with her real beau (Nigel Hamilton).

There were two interludes during the show that deserve particular mention. The showing of an excerpt from the classic Sykes film "The Plank" was an innovative idea that introduced a different medium and gave the audience a glimpse of Sykes in his younger days. A short musical diversion was supplied by Corky as he rattled and banged a virtuoso performance out of a washboard and bells.

In the final analysis it was an evening of enjoyable entertainment in the old school style. Sykes and Company had people laughing along with them and isn't that the ultimate goal of comedy—to excite people to riotous laughter and help them appreciate the humour in life.

'Work and Wages'

Filming the unemployed

by Ron Stang

"A lot of people are going to move out and they're not going to come back. They've been good citizens, bought houses and now they feel they've got nothing."

"There's no work in Halifax. You're forced out of your job. I'm not a lazy man. I want work."

"Without a job, what are you supposed to do in the meantime, eat air? How am I supposed to pay my rent with air?"

These are some of the comments made by former workers of the Halifax Shipyards, laid off when Hawker-Siddeley closed down its waterfront operation last year.

All the statements reflect a general cynicism and bitterness not only toward Hawker-Siddeley but to the prospect of finding other employment in Halifax. Such are the views typical of unemployed people interviewed in a videotape production of the Halifax Video Theatre entitled "Work and Wages—Halifax 1978."

The videotape, along with another entitled "Charlie Murray", an interview with former Nova Scotia fisherman organizer Charlie Murray who was interned in a federal government concentration camp for his labor and political activities during the Second World War, were shown at a public screening in Halifax last week.

The videotape "Work and Wages—Halifax 1978" pro-

vides an overview of the current unemployment situation in Halifax. Besides interviews with the unemployed discussing the difficulties they have either surviving without work or finding new jobs, it also chronicles the formation and activities of the Halifax Coalition for Full Employment, an organization set up early last year to pressure the government to create more jobs.

The videotape also has on-the-scene coverage of a recent labor struggle, last fall's strike by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW). Among other events, it shows the raid on local CUPW headquarters by the RCMP after the federal government declared the strike illegal and ordered the union back to work.

The two producers of the videotapes, Tom Berger and Bill McKeggan, said in an interview with *The Gazette*, their purpose in making the film was to use a grassroots approach to examine the problem of unemployment. They said they wanted "to have ordinary people discussing what being unemployed means to them rather than have experts dispense cold statistics." Berger and McKeggan said they hope this approach will make the videotape appealing to others who are unemployed.

Berger and McKeggan said they hope "Work and Wages—

Halifax 1978" as well as "Charlie Murray" will be shown to local labor and community groups.

Those interested in seeing either or both of these videotape productions should contact the Halifax Video Theatre at 426-5935. There is no rental charge.



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a burgeoning technological and industrial society. Using bright colors and distortion of nature to express the inner truth of its subject, it was, from its inception, to be understood in a social-political context. Its concern for the poor and suffering, and its unorthodox treatment of its material, led to its rejection by the complacent bourgeoisie of traditional art circles who were only interested, in Dietz's words, in "Peggy's Cove pictures."

The experience of German expressionist painters is particularly unsettling: in the 30's the Nazis branded their work as being "degenerate" and had it publicly burned. Nolde, forbidden to paint, kept a small calendar in his

vest pocket, and using water-colors (oils would give him away by their smell) secretly created what he called his "unpainted pictures." Others fared worse: Kirchner lost over 2,000 works to the flames, and the artist himself, already over 60, was recruited in the waning days of World War II to fight the allied

armies. He landed in a French prison camp where he eventually died heartbroken about his destroyed works. His fate is eloquent testimony to the folly of setting up absolute standards in art and other forms of human expression, and allowing the State to determine what we see and read.

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