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**RECYCLE
THIS
PAPER**

SIDESHOW

Continued from page 5

involved.

Although the show is now gaining popularity in the mainstream, it is also popular with the Modern Primitives, an underground movement of people who use the pain from piercings and other forms of body alteration to achieve a spiritual state. But Rose said his troupe is unconnected with this movement.

"There's not much pain involved for us anymore. We paid our dues years ago in our basements when nobody knew about us," Rose said. "I've been manipulating my body for years, but I come from the sideshow tradition and my sole purpose is to provide entertainment."

It all began for Rose when he "worked the ball toss and dunk tank" as a boy at the carnival near his home in Phoenix, Ariz. This

gave him the opportunity to go backstage at the sideshows, or "freak shows," he said. His interest piqued, Rose said he later went on to apprentice with street performers in Spain and Amsterdam, where sideshows are more common than in the United States.

Currently, The Jim Rose Sideshow is the only one in this country. Rose said the show is keeping alive an art form that dates back to Medieval times. In the United States, sideshows were a standard at circuses for almost a century, dating from the 1840s to the 1950s. Then, with the rise of the disability rights movement, it was no longer a socially acceptable form of entertainment. However, in those days the "freaks" were mostly people born with disabilities, according to Syracuse University professor Robert Bogdan's book, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*.

Previously a solo act, Rose used to alternate his performance with belly dancers at a "tacky Middle Eastern restaurant in the hip part of Seattle" in the winter months, he said. During the summer he could be found doing his act on the boardwalk at Venice Beach, Calif.

Then he began performing at the Crocodile Cafe, a Seattle club where the now famous bands Nirvana and Mudhoney started out. Word spread, and his act began to include others. One addition is the Amazing Mr. Lifo, previously a car insurance salesman who can lift heavy objects such as steam irons and cinder blocks from pierced holes in his tongue, nipples and other body parts.

Another troupe member is Matt "The Tube" Crowley, a former pharmacist whose act includes creating a bulimic cocktail that members of Ministry, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and The Red Hot Chili Peppers drank as a rite-of-passage at Lollapalooza. Via a seven-foot-long tube inserted through his nose to his stomach, The Tube is fed a concoction of beer, chocolate syrup, live slugs and other available ingredients, all of which find their way back up.

The show has "a bizarre theater humor that only works when atrocities happen," Rose explained.

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Jim Rose,
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DRACULA

Continued from Page 5

his performance is reminiscent of Kevin Costner's in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.

Ryder, in her role as the object of both men's desire, Mina, is similarly disappointing. She reacts rather than acts and it translates into an overwrought performance. The whole film is that way, with everyone playing each scene as if it were their last.

There is no sturdy base on which to place this film. No character is that important to us and no situation is made easy enough to fully grasp. Much like films such as *Prospero's Books* and *Woody Allen's Shadows and Fog*, nothing lies beneath the thick veneer of visual tricks.

This has been touted, by the

filmmakers, as one of the most loyal translations of the Dracula legend. But very little of this film has any literary quality. There's smoke, monsters and some incredible ornate sets. But nothing that will strike anyone as tokens of great literature.

One of the main problems, in fact, is that you can't help notice that it's all a movie. Perhaps it was intended to feel like a nightmare, but it's not menacing or frightening by any means.

There's a lot to like about *Dracula* for those who think of film as a primarily visual medium. It's a triumph of form and technical magic. One might be able to be wrapped up in the false world Coppola creates. If only he had characters and a point of having them there, the film would have had potential for being great.

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