

Rhythm & Reviews

Friday, October 16, 1998

The rage of the stage

'Play On!' serves up laughs with a behind-the-curtain look at the making of a play / PAGE 10A

And the beat goes on

A series of African drumming workshops will be held October 20-22 at the University / PAGE 12A

Oregon Emerald

Volume 100, Issue 34



Twisted Toons



'Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation' colors the Bijou Art Cinemas with a showing of crude cartoons, Oct. 16-22

By Holly Sanders
Oregon Daily Emerald

Newcomers to "Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation" should consider themselves warned: This is not Disney.

Victoria Schwerin, the publicist and "official desk monkey" for Spike and Mike's production company, wants to emphasize that the annual showcase of animated shorts is not intended for the general viewing audience.

"This is something partiers, you know, people who drink beer and sit around, would want to watch," she says. "It's not something an art critic at some big paper would like."

Advertising "all the really cool shit you can't see on TV," the latest incarnation of "Sick and Twisted" promises to be the sickest, grossest, most vile uncensored collection of shorts to smack into the big screen. Ignoring threats of regurgitated hot buttered popcorn, the Bijou Art Cinemas is exhibiting un-

usual bravery by showing the sensational sleaze-fest this month.

"Just expect the unexpected," says Spike, talking on the phone from his creative headquarters in La Jolla, Calif. "Don't come if you're easily offended."

In 1977, Craig "Spike" Decker and Mike Gribble, better known as Spike and Mike, started their production company, Mild Manner Productions Inc. They originally promoted underground bands with animated shorts. But the demand to see their work soon eclipsed the popularity of the bands.

Although Mike passed on in August 1994, Spike continues to send road crews to more than 30 cities across the United States and Canada. Now their incestuous family has grown to include the tame "Festival of Animation," the popular "Best

of the Fest" and the nasty "Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation."

Despite their animation expertise, the notoriety of "Sick and Twisted" has earned Spike and Mike the dubious titles of "kings of tasteless toons." And their mission to bring the sick, silly and subversive to the big screen has kept them on the fringes of the entertainment industry for more than 20 years.

"They just don't get it," says

Spike, who shows little compassion for the hollow or trendy. "But these are the same people that review 'Titanic.'"

Never mind that "Sick and Twisted" spawned MTV's diabolical duo "Beavis & Butthead" and the sensational "South Park" on Comedy Central. Or that creative minds such as Tim Burton and Nick Park launched their careers at the fest.

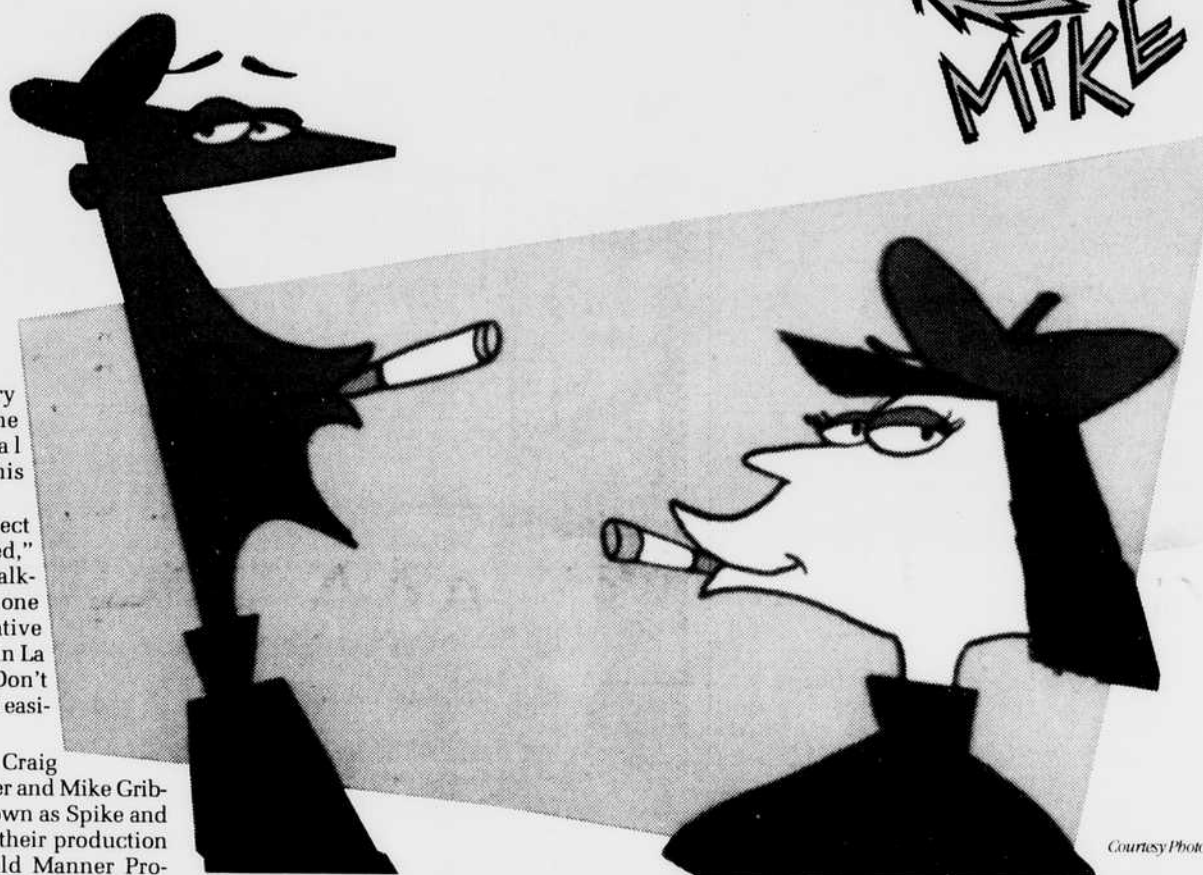
But the un-Hollywoodish

Spike says he is comfortable walking the fine line between art and alienation. "I see so much crap out there," he says. "I just want to cut through the fraud and B.S."

"Just the bitterness is motivation," Spike says.

Having worked long and hard for their sordid reputation, Spike and Mike continue to labor for their cause. But

Turn to **ANIMATION**, Page 10A



Courtesy Photo

Chinese acrobatic troupe tumbles, jumps into Eugene

The Hangzhou Acrobatic Troupe of China will perform Friday and Saturday at South Eugene High School

By Amy Boytz
Oregon Daily Emerald

They dive into buckets, leap through hoops, build a human pyramid — and they are coming to Eugene.

The Hangzhou Acrobatic Troupe of China will perform at South Eugene High School Friday and Saturday.

The Beijing International Artists' Management and the University's Chinese Student and Scholars Association are co-sponsoring the event.

This is the first time a Chinese acrobatic group has come to the Northwest, said Enge Xing, president of the CSSA.

"It's very significant ... to let the people know there's something going on," he said.

Acrobatics have long been a part of Chinese culture. Early versions of acrobatics, such as the Lion Dance, began as a form of art and entertainment after the Han Dynasty

(206 B.C.). With time, the art form and performance techniques evolved.

In recent decades, Chinese acrobatics have been recognized worldwide for their intricate level of technique.

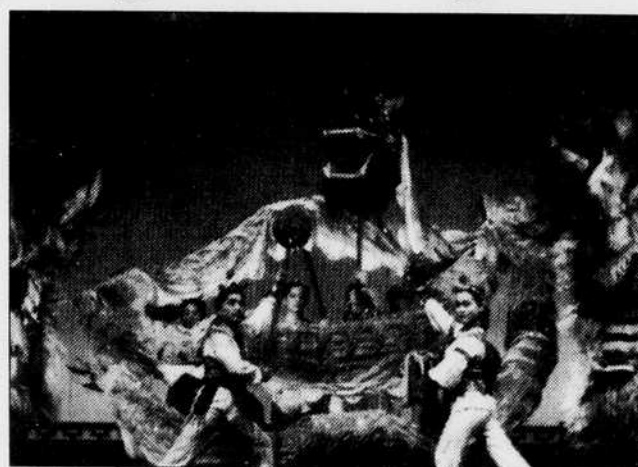
"They have a very long tradition and a very good reputation around the world," Xing said.

The Hangzhou Acrobatic Troupe has also had a long tradition. It was founded in 1958 and has toured around the world for 20 years.

The troupe has won gold medals for some of the programs in their performance, said Xingping Chen of The Beijing International Artists' Management. The plate spinning program won first prize at the Sixth International Acrobatic Festival in Paris.

"This is a very excellent performance,"

Turn to **ACROBATS**, Page 9A



Members of the Hangzhou Acrobatic Troupe from China perform in detailed costumes during a performance of the Lion Dance.

Wang Dini/Courtesy