



Problems for Parody

SFMT finds challenge in overstating current political climate.

By Aria Seligmann

San Francisco Mime Troupe's newest show, *Veronique of the Mounties*, chronicles the U.S. mission to continue to bring democracy to the world after its victories in Iraq, Syria and France. Now the U.S. has its sights on terrorist-threat Canada, and all that will ultimately protect America is Operation Frozen Freedom.

Meanwhile, the Canadians mobilize to fight off invasion and Royal Canadian Mounted Policewoman Veronique Du Bois is given the mission to journey into the heart of American darkness and recover the object that may stop the U.S. military's insane rush to the Great White North.

The SFMT appears as part of the Peace, Justice and the Media conference, presented by *Eugene Weekly*, Justice Not War Coalition and Northwest Media Project, which takes place Oct. 9-12 at LCC and the UO.

Formed in 1959 under the direction of R.G. Davis, SFMT performances began in lofts and basements. When Davis discovered *commedia dell'arte* (Italian Renaissance marketplace comedy), he began a nearly 40-year tradition of free shows in San Francisco parks.

SFMT became a collective in 1970, and has performed melodramas, spy thrillers, musical comedies, epic histories, sitcoms and cartoon epics. Most shows draw from a variety of these genres and all have in common a strong story line, avowed point of view, and larger-than-life characters. And of course, political parody.

Michael Sullivan, SFMT director and co-writer, along with lyricist Bruce Barthol, says he's actually had a hard time coming up

with material.

"In a way, for each of the last four years we've had a hard time. How do you overstate something when the dangers are so clear and present? Genetically modified food, corporate domination ... this administration is not even trying to cloak anything; it's transparent. Giving jobs to children, husbands, wives and giving money to buddies."

In the past, SFMT has toured extensively, but when the National Endowment for the Arts began slashing funding, it took a serious hit. Often, the troupe toured college campuses. With university funding also under the ax, fewer colleges can now afford to bring in bigger name acts.

But when SFMT does hit a college town,

The San Francisco Mime Troupe performs at 7 pm Friday, Oct. 10, and Saturday, Oct. 11, in the EMU Ballroom. Tix: \$19 adv., \$24 general, \$18 stu. dos. Tix available at the UO Ticket Office, 346-4363. A reception follows at 9:30 pm at Agate Hall on Friday. \$5.

'Making it comedic is the way to get the audience to get their minds to open up to other ideas and solutions.'

— Michael Sullivan

Sullivan says he notices some differences in the student body. The conservative tide that began to sweep across campuses in the 1980s and '90s hasn't abated much, although he says, now "there is a strong and vocal minority of activist students." But for the most part, he adds, when it comes to fighting for ideals, "Students don't want to be bothered. They just want to make money, and that's disturbing."

The future shouldn't be governed by money and profit, he adds, pointing out, "We're still benefiting from what our grandparents built at the end of the Depression, but now people aren't interested in spending money on schools, roads, the electrical grid. It's all 'I'm gonna get mine and screw you.'"

That's depressing. So how do you make that funny? "We show viciousness — when you pull the mask away it's scary but it's funny. Making it comedic is the way to get the audience to get their minds to open up to other ideas and solutions. If we were doing a dry economic dissertation ... we'd have a small crowd for one thing," adds Sullivan.

Instead, SFMT shows solutions — to an engaged audience — to hopefully activate participants.

While political satirists will make fun of all sides equally, Sullivan believes that doesn't leave the audience with anything to work toward. The message he wants to send his audience home with is simply, "There's a problem — our democratic republic is in danger right now and you need to do something for yourself and your country. What kind of country are you going to leave your kids?" **ew**

GREATER GOODS
515 HIGH EUGENE
OPENDAILY 541-485-4224

a **UNIQUE** shopping experience!

www.greatergoodsonline.com

FLIRTY & FUN
New • Redesigned • Recycled

Anything but **PLAIN**
JANE CLOTHES
Dare to be you

Buy on Thursdays
Marketplace West
3045 W. 11th Eugene, Or. • 541-684-0585

SpringBridge
Physical Therapy & Wellness Center

Leading the community in injury prevention, recovery, and wellness education.

October is National Physical Therapy Month. Care for your body.

- Age & ability tailored physical, occupational & speech therapy programs
- Medicare accepted
- No need for a physician referral

2675 Willamette St. Eugene
next to **INShape Athletic Club**
541.343.8889 • fax: 541. 343.9499
www.springbridgept.com

The Clothes Horse
A Woman's Resale Boutique...and more!

FAMOUS FALL HALF-OFF EVERYTHING SALE!

FOUR DAYS ONLY.
THURS.-SUN.
OCTOBER 2-5

- All sales final
- Store credit does not apply
- Yes, we will be buying.

720 East 13th Ave • 345-5099