

Prestigious children's show coming

Kathy Gordon
Huronian Performing Arts for Children, in cooperation with the Ontario Arts Council, is thrilled to bring, a critically acclaimed dance production by the National Tap Dance Company of Canada, to the Midland-Penetanguishene area. This spectacular show will be at Midland Secondary School on Sunday, Dec. 14, for two shows, a 2:30 p.m. matinee and a 7:30 p.m. evening production.

The Tin Soldier is adapted from the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale of the same name. It is the story of a penniless street boy, who, through the machinations of a shrewish old lady carouses with a bunch of tin soldiers and falls for a ballerina doll. Needless to say, things cannot continue in this fantastic way. Trouble strikes in the form of a vampish troll who watches over the doll like a jealous mother. She fiercely protects her baby from pollution.

The poor boy must also contend with a pack of sinister mafia-type gutter rats during his night of adventure.

Against such evil odds, what naive young man could hope to succeed? Back at the toy shop, he discovers that his beloved has been sold. This last betrayal of innocence is too much for our hero to bear-back he comes to reality, with the sound of the ballerina's music theme still ringing in his ears.

The plot is perfect for the National Tap Dance Company to parade its pedal talents, for there's a lot more to tap than the dazzling Hollywood musicals of the 1930's.

The rich tradition of tap dancing has been an integral part of North American popular entertainment for over 130 years, and its origins reach back to the most basic human responses to music: foot-tapping and stamping to mark the beat.

Folk dances such as flamenco, jigs, reels and clog dances combined with African rhythms to give tap its original form.

Shaped by minstrel shows and vaudeville, tap became a cultural representation of its time during the jazz era. Tap began to emerge as the art form we recognize today. And the National Tap Dance Company of Canada continues to explore and develop tap as a new direction in dance.

The National Tap Dance Company of Canada was founded in 1976 by co-Artistic Directors William Orlovski and Stephen Diamond as a means of keeping the North American tap tradition alive. It is the first and only Canadian company to dedicate itself to the preservation of tap as an art form, and also to explore and develop the wide range of expressions that tap dance provides.

In 1978, the Company mounted two complete shows and participated in the Toronto Dance Festival. As well, the Company was featured in the Canadian Film Awards and performed at the reception following the National Ballet of Canada's premiere of Elite Syncopations. The Tin Soldier was produced for the Christmas season and marked the first full-length tap piece as a story-telling medium.

Last year the National Tap Dance Company of Canada presented five new works in a gala celebration marking their third anniversary. In addition, the Company toured Northern Ontario schools and remounted The Tin Soldier, which was presented along with a new mixed programme during the Christmas season.

This year, prior to opening The Tin Soldier at the Saint Lawrence Centre, the Company will tour this production in several southern and central Ontario centres, and the Midland-Penetanguishene area is fortunate to be one of them. Response from both critics and audiences has always been consistently enthusiastic. The show has been a sold-out, smash hit for three years and is now recognized as one of Toronto's leading Christmas extravaganzas, sure to delight the entire family.

The milieu of The Tin Soldier is comedy, and even the wicked characters owe more to satire than tragedy. And, like any other kind of dance, tap relies on a number of conventions through which each dancer tries to express his individuality. The fun of watching tap is seeing how skillfully and ingeniously the artist imposes his own style upon the form.

There's more to tap, however, than celebrating the victory of mind over feet. There's that inimitable sound of a chorus of castanets clacking to a set rhythm—the sound of metal on wood which is just another variation of the sound of hand on drum: primitive, unifying, and essentially comic.

The music of The Tin Soldier is a mixture of jazz and ragtime, played by piano, trumpet and a variety of percussion. The show is filled with good tunes with strong forward beats. But the dancing, of course, is the heart of the show, the story being merely the excuse and the music an accent.

The touching *ras de deux* of the street boy and the ballerina doll, the exciting grand march of the tap dancing tin soldiers and the frightening boogie-time battle against the gutter rats are the dance highlights of this show.

The cast includes an impressive array of Canadian talent. William Orlovski,

founder and Artistic Director of the Company, alternates with Glen Kotyk as the busker boy. Judy Fielman dances as the ballerina doll and Karen Kramer performs as the strange but wise old lady.

Stephen Diamond and John Aubrey share the credit for the choreography, and Marek Norman composed the music.

To emphasize the calibre of this production, consider that Veronica Tennant,

internationally acclaimed ballerina, will be making two guest appearances with Jeff Hyslop, one of Canada's leading dance artists, during the run of The Tin Soldier at the Saint Lawrence Centre in Toronto later in

December.

Tickets for this fantastic family show are on sale now at a fraction of current Toronto prices. They are available at: Johnstone's Musicland, Midland Town Centre; Gignac's Childrens'

Wear. Penetanguishene: Sound Concepts, A & P Mall, Hwy. 27.

Tickets are limited, so we suggest you purchase yours early to avoid last-minute disappointment. Treat your family to this delightful entertainment.



Renee Addison and Stephen Greig ham it up in 'The Tin Soldier'

Weekend Ski Watch

This is the first in a weekly series that will keep you up to date on what ski resorts in the Midland area will be operating on the weekends.

With the aid of the Ontario Ski Resort Association, this paper will publish information local skiers will find invaluable, such as snow condition ratings, base depth, whether the lifts are open and all information concerning the cross-country trails at local resorts.

For this weekend, only two of the five local resorts this paper will cover had reported in. Mountain View Ski Resort in Midland reports sufficient base and weather permitting, they will be open this weekend.

Mount St. Louis also reports fairly good but limited snow conditions.

They will be open today weather conditions permitting.

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