

Salt Lake City Mime: more like a three-ring circus

By Randy Schultz

As the audience begins to filter in, a fine six-member band sets a relaxing mood with light jazz. Then, ever so gradually, two or three mime artists begin to interact with the audience. After a while you realize that the show you've been waiting to see has already started.

The nine performers of the Salt Lake City Mime Troupe, which should be named the Salt Lake City Circus, quickly overwhelmed audiences last weekend at the Backdoor with an amazing combination of traditional mime, vaudevillian comedy routines, juggling, clowning, song, dance and music. And every bit of it was superb.

The opening set consisted of traditional mime — some of the best I've ever seen. The mime artists — Matthew, Katie, George and David (the troupe is known professionally by their first names only) — run through scenes depicting an indoor track meet, a boxing match in which the microphone goes down for the count, and Olympic medal winners who suddenly become fighters, then arm wrestlers, and then ping-pong opponents. But the order of the scenes is unimportant. They change so swiftly and fit together so well that it is hard to tell where one ends and the next begins.

Not only is their mime hilarious, but also very moving. In portraying the classic emotions of love, hate, sympathy, pity and loneliness they also take a piece of your heart.

The highlight of their mime set occurs in a "Puppet" segment. David finds a puppet, played ex-



photo by Karen Stewart

THE MANY TALENTS of the Salt Lake City Mime Troupe were displayed over the weekend at the Backdoor to enthusiastic audiences.

actly by Matthew, and humorously manipulates his strings, pretending that the puppet is his friend. In a very sensitive and moving scene David gives Matthew his own heart so that he, too, may live.

After an intermission and some less traditional mime, the band steals the show for a while. Consisting of Paul on guitar; Greg on bass, trombone and tuba; Jan playing one-handed drums (she had a cast on her right wrist, but still out-played many drummers);

John on keyboards and trumpet, and Stewart on sax, flute and clarinet; they play everything from hardcore blues to jazz to hardcore rock and roll — and play it to perfection. In fact, they're laced so tightly together it's amazing they can still breathe.

Now, as if this isn't enough, Katie sings like Lydia Pense (of Cold Blood) and David can charm an audience as well as the Kinks' Ray Davies. The result: everyone in the place was on their feet dancing and having a good time.

The Salt Lake City Mime Troupe's good vibes are totally contagious.

But the show's still not over. After a short break comes the circus set, where George, as M.C., introduces a number of freak shows and other outrageously funny acts. The band members make fun of Hare Krishnas, Matthew portrays a man who talks backwards, and Katie, Matthew and David are the Marvels in a

great spoof of 40s song and dance. George, portraying George the clown, highlights this segment of the show, however, with his tricks and coy, silent humor. Especially entertaining is his juggling of a grape, an apple and a head of cabbage while simultaneously eating the apple.

After more than three hours of solid entertainment, George apologetically announces the end of the show. The nine performing members of the troupe, all accomplished artists and professionals, have enjoyed the show as much as the audience. But exhaustion takes over, and they reluctantly head back to their "house" — a converted school bus. Nobody likes to see a show this incredible come to an end.

You probably think it sounds like the Salt Lake City Mime Troupe's performance was one of the best live shows I've ever seen. And you're absolutely right.

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