

McVeigh is Perfection All the Way

by Lowell MacRAE

The most surprising thing about *McVeigh*—a new one-man play written by, directed by, produced by, and starring the darling of Charlottetown's theatre scene Richard James—is not that it's a masterpiece, but that it's a masterpiece that can stir an overwhelming sense of American patriotism, even in a cynical young Canadian like me.

Performed at the Arts Guild from Mach 28 to 30, *McVeigh* is the story of Timothy McVeigh, the man who was executed for the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City that killed 168 people. McVeigh, played by James, speaks to the audience directly from his prison cell on death row, just before his execution in June 2001. He reminisces on his childhood, his military service, his planning of the infamous bombing, and his subsequent trial and prison time.

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From the opening scenes, James shatters the audience's illusions of what McVeigh was really like. Accusations that McVeigh did drugs, was a gun fanatic, and was a loner are all addressed and dismissed; he is a victim of the media that wants to make a villain—not a hero—out of the man who killed 168 people. The Timothy McVeigh that James wants the audience to know and love is a man who adores his country. He respects the United States constitution above all other documents—even the Bible—and he even fought and killed the evil enemy for his country in the Persian Gulf War. The division between McVeigh's love for his country and his frustration over some of

the actions of the federal government is a powerful theme in the play.

Going into the play, I didn't know what to expect—I'm not the type of guy who goes around admiring baby killers—but I have to say that James's play inspired and moved me in ways that I never thought possible. There is a moment near the end of the play, just before McVeigh is taken away to be executed, when he reaches under the mattress of his cot, pulls out an American flag, wraps it around himself, and talks about how we should not cry for him because he has made his voice heard. I tried my best, but I couldn't stop the flow of tears!

The success not only comes from James's brilliant writing, but from his amazing acting. I heard one antisocial malcontent say that James was amateurish and unnatural, but I don't agree at all. James was incredibly expressive and exciting to watch: the sing-song speaking style, the rapid hand gestures, and head bobbing really grabbed my attention!

As for the technical aspects of the play, they were all fantastic. The lighting, the set design, and the sound effects were all very simple and minimal, but they worked. And who can blame the technical aspects for being minimal when James was responsible for all of those aspects, along with the writing, directing, producing, and acting. Orson Welles had nothing on this guy!

McVeigh is James's crowning achievement. If you ask me, James is wasting his time in little old Charlottetown. He should be moving someplace big like Toronto or New York City to display his talents to a wider audience. On the evening that I saw the play, the audience was widely appreciative and I'm sure a more cosmopolitan crowd would go wild for a play of *McVeigh's* caliber. One thing is for sure: I can't wait to see the next thing that James pulls out of his bag of tricks.

Windom Earle is Really Great

by Stephan MacLEOD



The UPEI SU president loves Windom Earle.

My band is really great. Windom Earle has been opening for bands and winning over audiences in Charlottetown for the past three years. With two full-length albums under my belt, tracks on two more albums, and an impressive cast of musicians who have played with me over the years, Windom Earle is certainly the most underrated group in Charlottetown.

People have called me entertaining, charming, humorous, and a good lay. And there's no question that this is all true. Just ask Matt Rainnie, the host of CBC Radio's *Mainstreet*. He loves Windom Earle.

My songs are awesome. I've had tracks in the top ten of MP3.com for months. I get more downloads than Sam the Record Man's favourite band The Rude Mechanicals.

But my live show is so much more impressive than my recordings. I can work the crowd into a frenzy with ease. When I say "Windom" at a performance, I can get an entire crowd of people to yell "Earle!" Kids love it. And you won't believe how excited people get when I start play-

ing my trademark song "Beefchowmein." It's so much fun. Everybody goes nuts and has a really great time.

Did you ever hear of Buck 65? He's probably the most original hip-hop artist in Canada. Well, he's played a show with me before. It was great. So have Port Citizen, Rock Ranger, The Rudy Huxtable Project and Eyes For Telescopes. Those shows were great too. It was so cool playing music with all of those talented artists. I'll bet the audience had as good a time as I had.

Windom Earle is the best. I can't believe I never wrote an article on my band in *The Cadre*, even though I'm its entertainment editor. You'd think I would have by now since we only ever write about ourselves. Oh well, I guess I forgot. I was too busy making great music to remember to promote myself in this student newspaper. If you would like to read more of me talking about myself, check out my website www.windomearle.com. It's fantastic—like my band Windom Earle.