

The Kitchener Record

One squeegee-clean, funny Canadian

by Harry Currie

Lorne Elliott is one funny dude.

Most people know him from his CBC Radio comedy series, *Madly Off In All Directions*, but until you see him live you can't fully appreciate his zany humour and delivery. Fortunately that's been taken care of, and if you scamper to Theatre on the Grand in Fergus today or Saturday you'll be laughing and singing along with this eccentric bundle of nerves.

Elliott's hair is something that would have done one of the three Stooges proud (I think it was Larry), and of course he uses it in his shtick.

What becomes quickly apparent is that Elliott is a keen observer of the Canadian way (whatever that is). He knows how we react to things, he knows what we'll do about things, and best of all, he knows what we'll say about things-- and with the right accent. Canadians don't have an accent, you say? According to Elliott we do: snottier than the Yanks and dumber than the Brits.

Mixing songs with his patter, Elliott's tunes and delivery are very much in the legendary Tom Lehrer vein, and Elliott plays the guitar about as well as Lehrer played the piano, which is pretty well, but Ed Bickert needn't worry.

Nothing gets by Elliott. He's got a joke, an anecdote or a song for just about anything you can think of that's going on these days. The squeegee kids get a song, which ends up with Mike Harris having a fatal car accident because his windshield wasn't squeegee clean. Island aerobics (PEI, that is) were simple: in the bar, on the beach, in the bar, on the beach, etc. He hooked us with a story on fly fishing -- the fishermen say you've got to tie just the right type of fly to catch a salmon because they're so smart. If they're that smart, why can't they see a gigantic grizzly bear waiting to scoop them out of the water?

Elliott's delivery is witty, a little caustic but never rude, and the patter flows out of him in a rapid stream, with appropriate facial expressions, the occasional dance step, and now and then a sonic FX.

He rambles about snowboarding (old guy rules), the mosquito problem, bats (rodents with radar), Suzukiosity (get it?), partridges (lunch bags with wings), racoons (his dog makes friends with them), Canada geese, snowmobiles, the weather (he gives a list of words for snow), and jokes about changing on the beach on a windy day.

The songs are clever, especially the one set to a Bach piece and the St. Anne's Reel, again, very Tom Lehrer. Elliott doesn't get into ethnic jokes, but takes mild pokes at

various Canadian types. On Quebec's St. Jean Baptiste Day: wouldn't you know it's the only province in Canada that has its fireworks day at the height of the forest fire season.

There was even a touch of Shakespeare and Keats, for Elliott, too, has written a sonnet -- but not about unrequited love -- it was a poem to dead batteries.

All in all, a very funny and entertaining one-man show -- something for the whole family, and a great chance to laugh at ourselves, for every one of us was up on that stage.