

Hockey Stories gives glimpse into our NHL culture

Actor Steve Pirot opens up about lazy storytelling, his show's lack of puppets, and how much he hates the Maple Leafs

theatrepreview

Hockey Stories For Boys

Runs 17-27 January

Written by George Szilagyi

Starring Steve Pirot, Murray Utas, and KS

Callihoo

Roxy Theatre (10708 124 Street)

CHARLIE CRITTENDEN
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Despite what the child-like title of *Hockey Stories for Boys* may lead you to believe, actor Steve Pirot regretfully admits that "we don't have any puppets. No clowns."

Although your interest is likely in danger of waning, don't rush to judge *Hockey Stories for Boys*. The play is a road-trip story involving a '70s station wagon, marijuana, and two rock-bottom friends on a trek across Canada.

One of them, Neil, has found the original deed to the Stanley Cup and wants to claim it. The other, Darcy, has to move some pot to Toronto and needs a ride. The stage is set for a rather strange journey.

Their car has an eight-track and a heater that don't work at the same time, and as Pirot puts it, "you can't rely on Neil Young to keep you warm."

To pass the time, the two friends take turns reading from the book they discovered the Stanley Cup's deed within, called *Hockey Stories for Boys*. Through simply reading these tales of hockey greats, the play deals with

issues of Canadian identity. Pirot sees the meaning of the play as something that goes far beyond sports fiction.

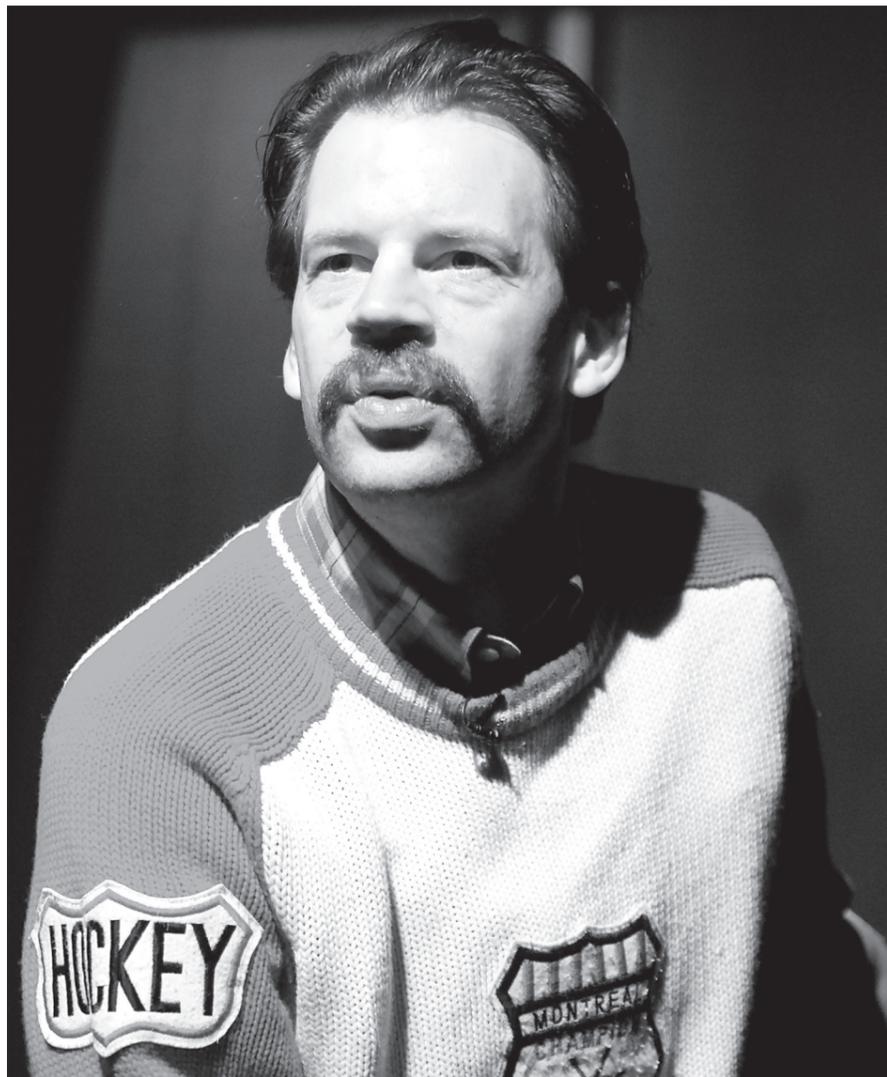
"This is not just about hockey; this is about our culture," he explains. "We've become so lazy as storytellers, [giving it all] over to television. If we don't know how to tell the stories, then we don't know how to own the stories, and then we don't know how to own our culture."

His words seem especially relevant considering the amount of American influence in Canadian media and sports. Other messages come across in the play and, while told in jokes, represent other parts of Canadian culture—namely, the parts based around a dislike for Toronto.

"One of the most important principles of this story is that Toronto sucks. It sucks hard," Pirot passionately explains. "The only thing that sucks more than Toronto is the Maple Leafs."

As the two friends journey to whatever conclusion awaits them in the big city, the humour of two losers adventuring together will hopefully balance out the show's deeper themes about Canada. And to Pirot and many others, the older tales retold during the course of *Hockey Stories* are a vast improvement to the only hockey story going on during the 2005 strike: that of rich players arguing with even richer team owners.

So, in wanting to draw the "atypical faces," and in focusing their show around hockey—even going so far as to order the three acts like hockey periods—*Hockey Stories for Boys* aims to be both meaningful and funny. And despite the lack of puppets, it just might.



STEFFI ROSSKOPF

FIVE-MINUTE MINOR FOR MOUSTACHE Steve Pirot explores our love of Hockey in *Hockey Stories*.

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