

Polished, precise, powerful

THEATRE

By BERWYN LEWIS

SO YOU WANT BLOOD
Devised by Jeannie Lewis and Ted Robinson with Jeannie Lewis and The All-Singing All-Dancing Orchestra.
Musical director: Red Symons. Director: Ted Robinson.
February 12 for six weeks, 8 pm, and
GEORGE MELLY LATE SHOW
With John Chilton's Feetwarmers.
Feb 12-19, 11 pm.
Both at Kinselas.

JEANNIE Lewis has not lost her spikes or bite. Her exuberance, focused energy and acerbic sense of satire, particularly when directed at local issues, is still very much in evidence.

Her show at Kinselas presents her in a finer, more palatable and professional light.

Dipping in and out of brilliance with crafty restraint she lowers her genius upon the unsuspecting and nails down her audience's attention.

Her material, with its powerful lyrics and excellent back up, is varied, exciting and electrifying.

Fast blackouts punctuate her skilfully choreographed numbers and mood changes which are set against a stark, Cubist backdrop.

Sometimes she toughs it out with stinging lyrics as in the unique Red Dust (an indictment of a way of life, a state of mind, a sell-out and a betrayal of a heritage familiar to us all). Sometimes she's the quirky revivalist chapel convener speaking in tongues, relieving her congregation of the burden of their money and all but foaming at the mouth.

Sometimes she's a perfection of Brechtian-inspired cabaret style as in a version of Brother Can You Spare A Dime? when she's accompanied by Joan Millar in pork-pie hat and tap-dancing spats. And



Jeannie Lewis . . . spikes and bite.

sometimes she's soulful and haunting as in the superbly lit A Reason For It All when the scene fades from the bare branches of a tree in winter to soft spring blossoms.

With split-second timing Jeannie Lewis changes from a zany character in zebra print tights to the elegance of classic Spanish as in Bulls, a delicious and sad tale about bulls which get bored on Sundays.

The accompanying Feet and Throat team are superb. In Le Billard Electrique Russell Garbutt savagely portrays a pinball parlour

anti-hero. He makes love to his pinball machine when his girlfriend fails to show up.

This is a Jeannie Lewis with a new sound and approach. She's polished, precise and even more powerful. Her I Will Survive has a positive message for everyone.

She's in top form and her show, with its strong bias towards Australian material is great value.

George Melly's late show is the ultimate in smooth and seductive showmanship. He presents a confection of Bessie Smith, Sophie

Tucker and Cole Porter blues and jazz. He is a brilliant singer and highly amusing raconteur.

In his rakish fedora, loud, double-breasted striped jacket and red-hot poppa looks he is almost a caricature of 1920 to 1940 jazzman looks.

Melly is a man of all seasons, combining the droll with the delightfully debauched. Journalist and critic as well as singer, he also appeared as a witness for the defence of Richard Neville during the Oz obscenity trials.

He is a charming and highly versatile performer ranging from "champagne in the bath" style to the hilarious and explicit as in his version of Kitchen Man, a Bessie Smith number.

His show evokes pool hall sharks, pimps, ragtime and piano bar routines. His Michigan Water Tastes Like Sherry Wine, the title track of his latest album, Sherry Wine, delighted the audience as did Shake Your Can when Melly shook his at the audience.

He is accompanied by an exemplary team — John Chilton on trumpet, Colin Bates piano, Barry Dillon double bass and Chuck Smith drums.



George Melly