

THEATRE

By BERWYN LEWIS

THERE WERE GIANTS IN THOSE DAYS by Steve J. Spears
Wonderwoman Susan Darmopil
Robin Terry Toaldo
Superman Peter Mountjoy
Director Peter Mountjoy
Presented by Stage In Time Theatre
Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers Street,
Surry Hills
December 10 to 18.

THIS two-month-old drama group has launched itself with one of Steve J. Spears' earlier works, *There Were Giants in Those Days*.

It's difficult to connect the writing in this play with that of the monumental and highly successful *The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin* by the same playwright. The two works are cul-

What superheroes do on off days

tures and planets apart and in a completely different intellectual idiom.

Giants attempts to white-ant the foundations of American modern mythology with its use of comic book heroes and a heroine, Uncle Su (Superman), Robbie (Robin) and Wonderwoman. They have flown in to honour the anniversary of Batman's death. While they wait for the other super heroes and heroines to turn up, nuzzling Budweisers and Bourbons, making desultory excursions into sex with each other and generally kipping on the Gotham City

couches the audience watches and waits for them to do something. For the sake of one's childhood fantasies one hopes they will rise to something more than one-dimensional comic strip characters and activities.

Spears' quirky writing intrigues with the promise of interesting developments, but they barely get off the ground. Combined with the low key, slow pace of direction the play is as moribund as a ton of kryptonite.

There is one high point when Superman smashes up the furniture in a fit of pique because Wonderwoman "interferes with

his reading habits" — Playboy magazine. One wonders why she bothers. In this production she looks as if she stepped off its pages. When she turns her seductive attention to Superman, Robin, despite his reputed proclivity for Batman, roars off in a huff to get some "baddies." He returns limping and bleeding. When Superman takes the "super" out of himself, abandons his X-ray vision and steel-bending strength and turns into a common-or-garden everyday wimp you realise super men and women definitely have their off days. This production makes you wish they'd taken the night off too and stayed at home.

Closet Bat, Super and Wonder people will have their hopes dashed by this unhappy resurrection of old comic strip idols. It seems these giants are just as much victims of non-specific depression as everyone else.