Wednesday, November 14, 1984/THE BLUE BANNER/11

Rocket Man flies high

3y Penny Kramp and Dale McElrath

"I think its gonna be a long long time/till touchdown brings me round again to find/I'm not the man they think I am at home."

Elton John touched down in Charlotte last Thursday, and he brought us "around again to find" he's still the superstar who dominated the rock music world of the 1970's.

It was an evening of mixed emotions.

After years of touring, Elton is finally saying goodbye to the "yellow brick" life of the road.

And after nearly a decade of devout fan-dom, we both had high expectations. Very high.

We had also been to Charlotte in October to see him, but ar illness forced him to cancel the show.

It was worth the wait. Elton didn't let us down. He was everything we hoped for--and more.

At about 8:30 p.m. the lights dimmed, and we saw a small flashlight making its way toward the wellused white piano dominating the stage.

It was Elton. We both screamed. (Although Dale probably won't admit it.)

When the lights came up, we saw he was dressed in a pink jacket with tails and a straw boater (hat).

When the first strains of Tiny Dancer from his MADMAN ACROSS THE WATER LP began to fill the coliseum, the crowd let loose one loud primal scream of approval.

From that moment on, E1ton entertained us with a repertoire of his classic tunes.

tragic life, from 1973's GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD album, the stage lights turned the Coliseum into a sea of blue; and people held up their lighters as symbolic "candles."

"Goodbye Norma Jean/ though I never knew you at all/You had the grace to hold yourself/While those around you crawled."

Then came a rocking red, white, and blue rendition of Philadelphia Freedom that proved the flamboyant Elton is still alive and

poured out around the stage as the lighting system rotated above the stage like a satellite.

This was a more subdued Elton than the jeweled, feathered showman of days past. But Elton proved he hasn't lost his touch as he leaped on top of his piano and ripped off his jacket to fling it into the eager mob.

Although we were saddened to see the end of Elton's touring days, we feel lucky to have experi-



Staff photo by Sylvia Hawkins

SCOTT MEBANE (r) AND MARGE RUIZ portray speech therapist James Leeds and his deaf pupil and love interest, Sarah Norman, in "CHILDREN OF A LESSER GOD."

World of deaf

By Anne Snuffer

Belk Theatre.

Deafness is a silence

full of sound. That

thought was artfully por-

trayed in Theatre-UNCA's

production of "Children

ot a Lesser God" by Hark

Medoff last week in Carol

ments to the final poig-

nant scenes, the audience

was aware of the frustra-

tion of the deaf living

Therapist James Leeds

gave a powerful and often

humorous performance as

he wooed and won the

heart of his pupil, Sarah

Norman, played by Marge

as he tried to communi-

cate and understand his

deaf student's hatred for

use of sign language was

skillfully combined words

with gestures, although

he never learned sign

before

Ruiz adeptly enacted

Both Mebane and Ruiz's

Mebane

this

"hearing" people.

extraordinary.

language

production.

Mebane was unrelenting

Ruiz.

Scott Mebane as Speech

in a "hearing" world.

From the opening mo-

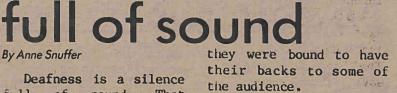
well.

He capped the number by pushing his piano off the stage (Don't worry, it survived!) and throwing the piano bench backstage, to the cheers of the

enced the on-stage charisma of a truly talented musician.

Elton said it for us in his bopping show-closer, Crocodile Rock.

"Crocodile rockin' is something shockin'/when your feet just can't keep still/I never knew me a better time/And I guess I never will."



Also, their assumed speech impediments naturally made understanding more difficult. "Hearing" people often have a problem understanding the speech of the deaf, which was probably the point the playwright was trying to make.

Jim Nave as Mr. Franklin, and Amy Grant as Mrs. Norman, were weak additions to the play's movement and fluidity.

Some of the plot's emotional moments were disconcerting, especially when the teacher-student relationship blossomed so suddenly.

This, of course, was the tault of the playwright rather than the actors or actresses.

Lighting was simple, yet effectively dramatic, and the use of classical music at appropriate intervals added an interesting flavor.

The ending was sudden yet tantalizing, with Mebane and Ruiz giving notably moving renditions of a marriage which fell apart because of differences between one who heard and one who didn't.



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the trying role of a young girl, deaf from birth, who finds meaning outside of the frustrating institutional life she has always known. Colin White as Orin, and Cathy Sheehan as Lydia, added a light touch of humor and a human element to the play's profound plot. At times however, they were difficult to under-

stand. Possibly because

Belk Theatre is round.

and in certain positions

"Children of a Lesser God" had its moments of weakness which detracted from its potential impact.

But it provided an insight into the world of the handicapped which "normal" people often fail to perceive.

audition appointments call 645-4777