

Depressing experience

Sienna Red at Newcastle Theatre Royal until Saturday

A BIXEXUAL ex-hippie in charge of a DIY superstore? Yes, belief has to be suspended from a great height to comprehend the curious world created by playwright Stephen Poliakoff for the Peter Hall Company.

Harry (played by Martin Shaw) is an odd-ball who has late-night parties in his DIY "shed" and so wins the initial

approval of his bosses for his dedication to long opening and the affection of his boss's wife (Francesca Annis as an elegantly and haughtily bored suburban housewife).

Much as one yearns to empathise with bold Harry's one-man stand against the increasing uniformity of the world, the feeling gradually dawns that he is all shout and no action.

The play left me feeling depressed.

DAVID WHETSTONE

Siberians impress

Novosibirsk Philharmonic Orchestra, Newcastle City Hall.

BANISH thoughts of permafrost and snow on their boots — this Siberian orchestra are red hot stuff.

Arnold Katz, conductor since the band was formed in 1956, has achieved impressive standards. Katz managed to make Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony an

overwhelming experience with splendid control of the huge span of the first movement.

Nicolai Madoyan proved to a superb technician on the violin, even at 19. The challenge of Prokofiev's First Violin Concerto with its welter of tricks seemed easy to him.

The concert opened with a selection from Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

KEVIN STEPHENS



IAN WINTER

■ Woman of the people: Fame can turn pop performers into aloof icons, increasingly remote from the fans who made them. Not so Michelle Shocked. Before her concert at Newcastle's Riverside this week she led a workshop for all comers at Newcastle Polytechnic. A good time was had by all (see review).

Reviews

Smiling Michelle

Michelle Shocked, Riverside, Newcastle

WHATEVER has happened to Michelle Shocked? Gone is the runaway, the protest singer with fire in her belly, put there by Woody Guthrie.

Here she is, with the broadest of smiles on permanent hold, introducing the band: "Alison, this is Gary, Gary, Alison."

Wearing a floral print dress and a straw hat, fiddle, banjo and

accordion to the fore and with a little picket fence around the footlights, Shocked whooped and stomped.

Mid-way through you were left thinking, "barn dances were never like this"

The smile only slipped when she sang Graffiti Limbo, about an incident of police brutality, dedicated to Rodney King and L.A. "where there's no justice"

MICHAEL COOKE

Top duo lined up in two star dates

WORLD class jazz is heading North with tenor saxophonist Spike Robinson and trumpeter Bill Berry due at Alnwick Playhouse

Spike Robinson, playing tomorrow, is in the mould of Stan Getz

And Bill Berry, one of the few white musicians to

play in Duke Ellington's Orchestra, is musical director of the Monterey Jazz Festival. He comes to Alnwick on June 20

Tickets for both concerts are £4 and are available from the Playhouse on (0665) 602586 or on the door.

MICHAEL COOKE