

THE FOUR CASES, by Bahram Beyza'ie, translated and adapted by Soheil Parsa and Peter Farbridge, directed by Parsa, with Farbridge, Viv Moore, J. Brian MacDonald, Gordon Mackenzie and Randolph Swyer. Presented by Modern Times Stage Company at the Tarragon Extra Space (30 Bridgman). Runs through Sunday (July 21), Thursday-Saturday at 8 pm, Sunday at 2:30 pm. \$12-\$14, Sun pwy. 531-1827. Rating: **NNN**

In the Persian fable which forms the basis for Iranian playwright **Bahram Beyza'ie's** play, four people build a scarecrow for protection, only to have it come to life and dominate them. **Modern Times'** adaptation adds a contemporary Canadian sensibility while retaining the play's allegorical structure.

Working within a rigorously anti-naturalistic form which employs elements of dance, clowning and puppetry, the company brings the fable refreshingly to life. Athletic, physically demanding choreography and wildly percussive live music by **Baha Sadr** combine to portray emotions ranging from bravado to terror in a way that is both haunting and darkly funny.

Movement and dance are used as effective substitutes for dialogue, and there is a bright sense of characterization and much satiric humour in the exchanges between the characters — each of whom represents a different social group.

The actors all show a verve for the physical comedy. **Peter Farbridge** is particularly good as the hapless downroader, his rubbery face and body bouncing from manic to sardonic and back. —**JL**