

# THE PLAIN DEALER

OHIO'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER



## Acts feature the cause that refreshes

By **DEBBI SNOOK**

PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

Free of conventional theater trappings, performance art makes a handy, immediate soapbox for social, political and artistic points of view.

Friday's roster at the fourth annual Cleveland Performance Art Festival at Cleveland Public Theater took advantage of that soapbox and ran the gamut of causes from animal rights to a demonstration of anti-art destruction.

Some of it was great fun, but some of it might be better watched through safety goggles. The program repeats at 8 p.m. tomorrow.

Strongest of the three acts were actors Rae C. Wright and Tim Kirkpatrick, veterans of the New York Street Theater Caravan. They are animal activists, but the label does little to describe the freshness, vitality and howling good humor they bring to the topic.

Using large helpings of irony and farce, they delivered several skits including a countrified ode to hunting the white-tailed deer, complete with climactic kill. A fictional fur fashion show ("It's only cruel not to wear one," says the emcee) included a jacket made from Two Socks, the animal made famous in "Dances With Wolves." And their high society benefit, "Dance and Dine," featured professional dancers pantomiming the menu. "Oooh," Wright squealed like a game show contestant. "It's a veal calf being taken away from its mother!"

### THEATER REVIEW CLEVELAND PERFORMANCE ART FESTIVAL

Wright also offered a dramatic piece, a monologue by a victim of violence who imagines she is a hunted animal. While the writing got a bit aerobic, her acting kept it heartfelt all the way through. Both actors changed characters crisply throughout their pieces adding skill to their sharpened wit.



"Colorado Springfield", an apple-pie Country - Western singer leads the audience in a graphic song of American gore.