

WHAT'S

Animal rights activist gets message across

By Christopher Hume
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Michaele Jordana, if you're reading this, I want you to know I'll never kick the cat again. Never, I promise.

After seeing Jordana's performance art piece, *Storming Heaven*, last night, who would dare raise their fists — or their feet — in anger against an animal?

Well-known for her air-brush paintings of dead whales with their guts hanging out, Jordana has been an animal rights activist before Vicki Miller ever heard of the Toronto Humane Society. In her latest effort, Jordana continues her crusade to make us aware of the horrors perpetrated against cats, dogs, monkeys, and all the other creatures who are victims of human cruelty.

However, *Storming Heaven*, which runs at 8 p.m. tonight and tomorrow at Harbourfront's splendid du Maurier Theatre, might have left a few people wondering what they had seen. Was it performance art? Or was it an arty rock show with a serious message?

The answer is a bit of both, but with a heavy dose of good old rock 'n' roll to keep things moving.

Jordana and her musical buddies — Douglas Pringle (composer and keyboardist), Ricky Swede (guitarist) and Alan Hosack (bassist) — put on a 75-odd minute program that felt like a scaled-down version of what in the 1960s would have been called a rock opera. While the ascetic looking Jordana sang and danced, slides of mutilated animals flashed on stage and dry ice filled the room.

The climax comes with the song, "Executioner", a powerful cry of anguish directed against the nameless lab technicians and their bosses in the executive suites who think nothing of sticking electrodes into cats' brains.

But the anger gives way to reflection and in her last song, "The Room", she poses the question, "Is your love strong enough to heal?"

I can't vouch for the ability of anyone else's love, but Jordana's might well have what it takes.

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Douglas Pringle, Michaele Jordana, Ricky Swede