ARTS ARTS

MIT production of Soldier's Tale insipid

Stravinsky's L'Histoire du Soldat, MIT Dramashop's, MIT Dance Workshop and the MIT Chamber Players, Kresge Auditorium, March 14 & 15.

The Dramashop production of Stravinsky's L'Histoire du Soldat is unfortunately pedestrian dull. It is dominated by the unimaginative choreography of Beth Soll, whose dancers are first encountered jumping around pointlessly as the orchestral get-up. Despite one interesting solo by Beth, the dancing was dominated by unsophisticated and stylized movement, much too clumsily done.

The inaudibility and insipid line central to the piece. The acting was marred by the grating, annoying voice of Sean Tolentino, The Narrator. There were some nice moments to the acting of G. Albert Runge (The Soldier) and Stuart Rumsey (The Devil); Runge, in The Devil dressed up as an old lady in red, was quite good. But stage direction was much of the rest of the action as well as loose.

The best thing to do was to try and close one's eyes and enjoy the music, for, under Marcus Thompson's direction, the MIT Chamber Players put on a good performance. They had earlier played Varak's Octandre, and a well-balanced and colorful rendition it was too, The Stravinsky was also played sharply, with evocative programmatic content contributed by each member of the Ensemble; the clear lines characteristic of Stravinsky were kept tautly drawn, with particularly strong performance on brass and by Kathy Winkle, whose solo violin sang the Soldier's song with deep commitment. It's a shame the poverty of the activity on stage detracted so heavily from the power of Thompson's careful orchestral direction; unfortunately, the show as a whole was quite simply a bore.

Prices for this production — $5 for students and $10 for others — set a bad precedent. MIT students are price sensitive, as was tragically demonstrated by the empty Kresge Auditorium. On the other hand, the prices might have been doing the absent audience a favor.

Jonathan Richmond

Saint Patty's treat

(Continued from page 9)

The Grey Fox (a Canadian documentary).

Each band member was given a solo spot, with the most riveting performances delivered by fiddler Sean Keane and harpist Derek Bell. World champion step-dance Michael Flinn also graced the performance with his spectacular dancing ability.

Flinty even acknowledged the importance of American culture on his art form by inserting a Michael Jackson moonwalk into his finale.

The emotional high point of the concert came when the Chemists were joined by former founding member Sean Potts, who was in Boston celebrating his 25th wedding anniversary. Potts filled in as though he had never left, interpreting his inspired performance on tin whistle with good-natured ad lib to his mates, recreating the intimate pub setting where this music is still most at home.

The Chemists may have a world following, but they have the good spirits to last through 24-year Saint Patrick's Day.

David G. Shaw

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Jonathan Richmond

Dramashop's production of Stravinsky's L'Histoire du Soldat which will have a further performance tonight in Kresge Auditorium.