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PHOTO BY DAVID COURTS

At Shaw Festival: Caroline Cave gives a superb performance as Cleopatra in George Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*.

Shaw festival plays explore politics, friendship, old age

BY HUGH GALLAGHER
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Even the lightest offerings at the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, deal with sometimes troubling ideas.

Ideas were always central for the Anglo-Irish playwright who gives his name to this festival, so it's appropriate that the festival emphasize the ideas behind the entertainment.

George Bernard Shaw's plays often are complexly woven debates in which the characters stand for different positions. Being a fair man, Shaw always gave equal arguments for the positions he opposed.

Some of his plays are a blitzkrieg of talk, talk, talk. Conversations once thought highly witty among the literati have lost their humor with time, changing values and a different reality.

But Shaw's best plays retain a power to stimulate, provoke and amuse.

This year the festival explores imperial politics (British and Roman), life in the big city, the loneliness of old age, the fragility of friendship and other topics in plays by Shaw and his contemporaries. Since Shaw lived from 1856 to 1950, that takes in a lot

Please see **FESTIVAL, B7**



Tough guys: Peter Krantz as Detective McLeod, right, gets a lecture from a cop-shop reporter played by Williams Vickers in "Detective Story."

Beyond Silverdome scores big laughs at Second City

BY SILARON DARGAY
STAFF WRITER

Some of the Second City skits in *Beyond Silverdome* may seem second hand, but the all-male cast throws more than a few curve balls into the sports-theme show.

Beyond Silverdome, now in its home stretch on Tuesday nights at Second City in Detroit, gives nine understudies a chance to perform "best of" material originally improvised by mainstage troupes in Detroit and Chicago.

They remain faithful to the original scripts that lampoon sacred male territory — football, fishing, hunting and baseball — while punching up the humor with their own quirky characters, local references and fresh staging.

Take the show's running joke about baseball, for example.

It started out as a skit and black-out sketch in a previous Detroit Second City revue. Then, was revamped for a mainstage "best of" show.

"When we got it we updated



Crazed fans: Jeff Trudeau, (left), Pete Jacques and Ron Aniel "watch" a football game on TV in *Beyond Silverdome*, at The Second City.

it even more. We took bits from both shows, revised it and expanded it into three scenes," said Pete Jacques of Farmington Hills. "It was originally written three or four years before Comerica Park was built. Then when it was redone,

Comerica Park had opened. When we got it, the joke is still there: We have a beautiful stadium and the Tigers still suck."

He and Steve Sabaugh of Sterling Heights play sportscasters struggling to deliver a colorful play-by-play as the action crawls on the infield. By the 20th inning, with the score stuck at zero, Sabaugh's character eventually falls asleep at the microphone.

The pair developed their characters while working in the box office at Second City — long before they were cast in the show.

"There was a Zamboni in the lobby. For some reason everyone who walked in felt this urge to sit in the Zamboni. We'd sit in the box office watching people get into the Zamboni," Jacques explained. "I hate to say it, but it really started out by making fun of everyone and it grew from that into two sportscasters."

Please see **SECOND CITY, B6**



Sportscasters: Steve Sabaugh (left) and Pete Jacques face a tough — and funny — challenge trying to make a Tiger game sound interesting.

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