

The New York Times

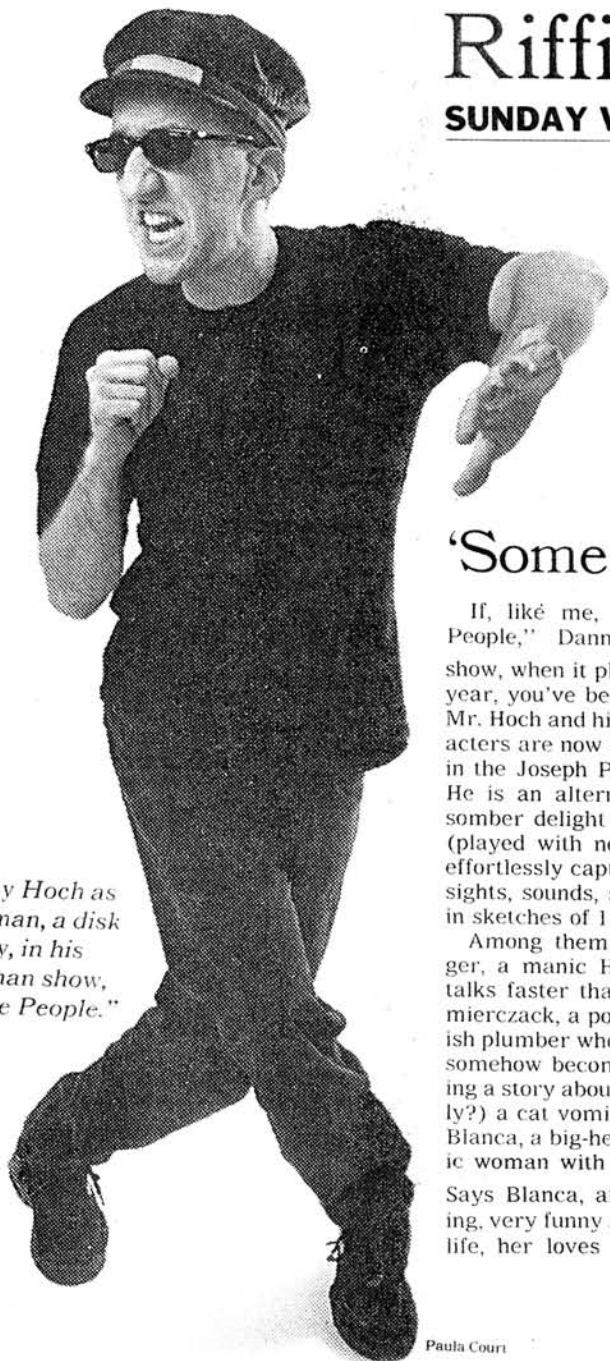
THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1994

Arts & Leisure

T H E A T E R

Riffing on a City

SUNDAY VIEW/Vincent Canby



Danny Hoch as Madman, a disk jockey, in his one-man show, "Some People."

'Some People'

If, like me, you missed "Some People," Danny Hoch's one-man show, when it played at P.S. 122 last year, you've been given a reprieve. Mr. Hoch and his cast of urban characters are now at the Shiva Theater in the Joseph Papp Public Theater. He is an alternately hilarious and somber delight in a 90-minute turn (played with no intermission) that effortlessly captures New York City sights, sounds, smells and attitudes in sketches of 11 different people.

Among them: the Caribbean Tiger, a manic Hispanic deejay who talks faster than I can think; Kazmierczack, a polite, soft-spoken Polish plumber who, while fixing a sink, somehow becomes sidetracked telling a story about (did I hear correctly?) a cat vomiting into a shoe, and Blanca, a big-hearted young Hispanic woman with a mind of her own. Says Blanca, after a long, wandering, very funny monologue about her life, her loves and her gay room-

mate, "I think I have to learn to be nice to myself."

On the basis of this one show, Mr. Hoch would seem to be remarkably gifted as an actor, mimic, social critic and anthropologist. He collects and writes his own material, which at the Public, has been directed by Jo Bonney, who also directed three of Eric Bogosian's one-man shows. Mr. Hoch is cooler than Mr. Bogosian, meaning only that his monologues don't have Mr. Bogosian's narrative shapeliness. Instead, they seem free-flowing, as if improvised on the spot. They are like musical riffs, like jazz. They also have something of the same effect. You respond in a purely emotional way to what you're hearing, while getting an extra boost from your awareness of the artistry involved. Good theater works that way.

Paula Court

SOME PEOPLE Portraying 11 characters, Danny Hoch has built monologues like musical riffs.