

Arts & Entertainment

Meg shows womens' plight then and now

By Kelly A. Ellenwood

Paula Vogel's *Meg*, the University Theatre's current production, is the story, (that is, the "other story") of Margaret More's brilliant and unique life. Margaret was the daughter of Sir Thomas More, the

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famous martyr of the Catholic Church during the reign of King Henry VIII.

Meg is not a history play, however. The audience is spared of much of the historical action of 16th century Tudor England with its male dominated political hierarchies of Henry VIII and the Catholic Church. These are seen as outside forces; the play itself concentrates on how Meg deals with them as a daughter, a wife, and a mother.

Margaret More Roper was an oddity in her era. She was perhaps the only woman in her time that was such a gifted scholar. The role demands many

layers of subtle, strong character choices. As Meg, Kathy Gruber may have succeeded in bringing to life the vital and growing woman that the script called for, had she made more commitment. One could see that she was making these choices, but somehow they were lost in the space between the mind and the audience's perception; she lacked the clarity and energy necessary for the role.

On the other hand, Robert Jackson as the treacherous Cromwell, made subtle character choices that cut right through his surface dialogue and made me squirm in my seat. As Sir Thomas More, Larry French continues his tradition of strong and smooth delivery. However, there was a connection lacking in the scenes between More and Meg, and these were the scenes which should have been the most powerful.

Benjamin Miller as Meg's husband, William Roper, was the surprise of the evening. His timing was wonderful and I especially enjoyed the transition scene which ends Act II when the once-stuttering village idiot transforms himself into a literate and effusive parliamentarian.

Perhaps the most touching scenes were between Meg and her stepmother, Alice More, whose character was portrayed by the ever comic and capable

Susan Conover. Meg's struggle with her feminine roles in life was poignantly made clear when juxtaposed with this gruff yet tender character. Conover's portrayal was crackling with vitality and warmth, and provided the funnier scenes in this comedy/drama.

The performance was almost technically perfect. The lighting by Phil Oglesby was very smooth, creating needed contrasts between two person scenes and Meg's many monologues. I was especially impressed with the set, designed by Mary Ann J. Fleming. It really created the mood of a time long ago with the dark red, green and gold leaded glass windows, and with the light of a single candle during the blackouts.

I would not say that *Meg* did not succeed; I often felt the injustice that had been done to Margaret More Roper and other potentially great women in history. This is what the playwright intended, and if a director and cast can make this kind of impression, they have fulfilled their obligation to the playwright, the audience and themselves. *Meg* continues its run in the Studio Theatre every night this week through Saturday. Tickets are available to students at \$3 and to the general public at \$5 at the Howell box office in the Temple Building.

Tom: ugly and unnecessary Glenn: it's an honest portrait

Excerpts from the cable television program, *At The Concession Stand*.

Announcer: Yes, America, it's that time again. Time to put away the dog and roll up the TV.

Tom: This week we're going to review some really neat films. Let's start with *Hot Dog*.

Tom Mockler & Glenn Stuva

Glenn: *Hot Dog* is the story of a couple of crazy guys who decide the way to get ahead in life is to open a hot dog stand in Lincoln, Nebraska. Due to the lack of film clips, Tom and I will act out a scene from the movie.

Tom: "Gosh, George, I thought you brought the mustard."

Glenn: "I thought you did."

Tom: "Oh no!"

Glenn: Ha Ha Ha.

Tom: Funny? You bet. I don't understand why they had all those skiing scenes, though.

Glenn: Well, it's like William Hurt says, sometimes you just have to let art pass through you.

Tom: I can't really rate this film, since I didn't see it.

Glenn: You dummy! You weren't supposed to say that.

Tom: Ha Ha Ha.

Glenn: Next film: *Reckless*.

Tom: *Reckless* is a remake of last year's version with Richard Gere. It's based on the Jerry Lee Lewis song.

Glenn: "You leave me, oohhh RECKLESS!"

Tom: He gets wasted at the end.

Audience member: You people are phonies. We pay good money to see your show, and then you sit and make up stories about films you've never seen.

Glenn: That's a pretty strong accusation.

Another audience member: I'm leaving. Next time I'm going to watch Siskel and Ebert.

Tom: Yeah, well at least we're not as obnoxious as Neal Gabler, even if we've never seen a film in our lives. You've got to give us that much credit.

Audience member: I suppose you're right.

Nick Danger: "Far out, Catherwood. Just roll a few bombers and leave them on the sidetable."

Tom: You know, if there's one thing I can't stand, it's those idiotic Burger King commercials.

Glenn: Yeah, I know what you mean. Every time I see those things, I feel like killing someone.

Tom: Which brings us to the subject

of this week's movies: *Star 80* and *Silkwood*.

Glenn: I said I don't want to talk about those movies. I'd rather talk about something meaty like *Hot Dog*.

Tom: *Star 80* is simply an UGLY film. Also, I didn't think the ending of *Silkwood* seriously detracted from the film, but was merely anti-climatic. So there. I'll talk about anything I want to.

Glenn: Now there you go again. Okay, we'll play it your way for now. These movies were two of the best 1983 had to offer. Both were well directed, and had very talented casts. *Star 80* was ugly, but sometimes things are ugly, so you have to be ugly to present an honest portrait of it. If you can't take a little ugliness then don't go see ugly movies. I can't help it if some people lack intestinal fortitude. As for *Silkwood* I thought the ending was excellent. It's not often you see such a tastefully done death sequence.

Tom: Ha! The joke's on you! I forced you to talk about the movies I wanted to. First of all, I don't think *Star 80* was one of the best films the year had to offer, although I do agree that *Silkwood* was. *Star 80* is ugly, not necessarily bad, but not necessarily good. Just because a film is ugly doesn't make it art. Actually, if *Star 80* could be considered one of the best films of the year, it would be purely by default.

Glenn: I never said that ugliness made something artistic. I just think the real reason people dump on this film is because it's never light and upbeat. People want some sort of comic relief, and Bob Fosse refuses to allow the audience such an indulgence. It wasn't a pretty story. Why should he try to make it appear that way?

Tom: Yes, but it's not a great film. Why do you persist in this fanciful notion, like some Frenchman?

Glenn: I'm not saying it was a great film. I'm saying it was photographed well, directed well and acted well. If you can handle a depressing movie, I'd recommend it. If you can't, stay home and watch *Three's Company*, or something else that's more on your intellectual level.

Tom: You're the one who sits around watching television all day. I didn't consider it a depressing movie, just ugly. I didn't consider the acting overwhelming. And it was well directed to the extent that Fosse shows he can produce two hours of ugliness. I don't consider this a film worth spending \$3.50 on. I don't recommend it. This film was unnecessary. The best performance is by the fellow who plays Dorothy Stratten's husband, and he was despicable. Sleaze.

Glenn: I refuse to talk about this anymore.

NOTSPOTS



Richard Stoltzman will be appearing with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. For complete details, see *Around Town*.

Television

• *The Cafeteria* is based on a story by Pulitzer Prize winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer. The story centers around two holocaust victims living in New York City. It is being shown as part of the *American Playhouse* series and airs at 9 p.m. on Channel 12.

Radio

• *Fly By Night* (7:30 p.m., KZUM 89.5 and 99.3 FM) features the best in black music. The program, which is hosted by Steve Woods, airs 7:30 p.m. weekly.

At the Sheldon

• *Fires Were Started*, a 1934 British documentary directed by Humphrey Jennings, will be showing in the Film Theatre at 3:30, 7 and 9 p.m. Admission is by donation.

• New exhibits being unveiled in the Art Gallery include photographs from

the Permanent Collection, photography by Michael Geiger and craft art by Walter Nottingham. The three displays will be shown through April 1.

Around Town

• Award-winning clarinetist Richard Stoltzman will appear tonight with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra. Stoltzman, who has collected a Grammy and is nominated for another one this year, will be featured in two compositions: Copeland's "Concerto for Clarinet" and Stamitz's "Concerto No. 10 for Clarinet and Orchestra." Other pieces to be featured in tonight's performance include Haydn's "Symphony No. 31" and Hindemith's "Noblissima Visione." Robert Emile is the conductor for the program, which is scheduled to get underway at 8 p.m. in O'Donnell Auditorium on the campus of Nebraska Wesleyan University, 50th Street and Huntington Avenue.