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James Pandzik, left, and Doug Koth in the Studio Theater production of "The Master Builder." Photo by Steve Boerner

Play called 'hymn to youth'

By Susan Edwards

Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, is a kind of hymn to youth said translator and actress Eva Le Gallienne, an original star of the play, according to director Robert Schanke.

The Howell Theatre production opens tonight. It will run through Sunday at 8 p.m. Tickets are available for \$2 from the Temple Bldg. box office.

The drama traces the career of a Norwegian architect, played by James Pandzik, who once promised a young girl, Hilde, a future with him.

Twelve years later Hilde, played by Cindy Murphy, appears, forcing the architect to fulfill his pledge and re-examine his waning career.

Personal, powerful

Pandzik, a senior theater major, said the play was a very personal, powerful drama.

His part is a challenge, he said, not only because he is on stage the entire time, but because he initiates and controls much of the action.

Director Robert Schanke, on leave of absence from Midland Lutheran College, has directed more than 20 productions in New York City and elsewhere.

Although the play deals seriously with the struggle all humans have in striving for the ideal, Schanke said Ibsen also included comedy.

Ibsen in style

Ibsen's plays, which were once considered old-fashioned are now back in favor, Schanke

said. They were once praised by Bernard Shaw for dealing with social issues.

The Master Builder gained popularity in America, he said, through productions during the 1920s starring Le Gallienne.

Schanke, who is writing his dissertation on Le Gallienne and is using her translation of Ibsen's play, visited the 75-year-old actress at her Connecticut home.

Le Gallienne ran her own Broadway repertory company, the Civic Repertory Theater, in the 1920s and 30s and tried theaters again in the 1940s and 1960s, Schanke said.

She said being a woman was newsworthy enough to initially help her open a theater, according to Schanke. If she had been a man, she said, the theater probably could have survived the Depression, Schanke added.

Women active

Women were active in Le Gallienne's theater, he said. She hired female business managers, house managers and crew members.

Schanke said his visits with Le Gallienne and her 75-page introduction to *The Master Builder* have helped tremendously with his direction.

They crystallized Le Gallienne's ideas and gave him a sense of how she played the catalyst part of Hilde, he said.

Because she has always been connected with classical rather than popular theater, Schanke added, Le Gallienne is well known only among theater professionals.

Faith Ringgold Black Artist

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