

arts & entertainment

O'Neill play removes mask

Theater review by Robert C. Thurber
An immense task was undertaken by the UNL Theatre Dept. Friday night when it staged Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

Immense proportions, because O'Neill has created what most authorities consider to be drama in its purest form. He has removed all normal theatrical trappings and does not allow his actors to hide behind masks or to indulge in clever business. He has, in a sense, left them naked on the stage with nothing but the import of his words.

The result as witnessed Friday night, is a rare theatrical experience of great emotional impact.

O'Neill's plot concerns a single crisis-ridden day in the life of the Tyrone family. The father, a famous actor, is an alcoholic miser, the mother, a decaying dope addict; an older brother, a dissipated alcoholic, and a younger brother (a portrait of

O'Neill as a young man), suffering from consumption.

Within the span of one day, the tortured family history is exposed, from the mother's initial turn to morphine at the birth of her third child, to nomadic wanderings of the youngest son, Edmund, leading to his illness.

It is evident from the outset that there is a representation and transcendence of reality in the play. O'Neill cuts open his characters to reveal their true identities and feelings. He has laid bare their souls and shows their intense pain and sorrow.

O'Neill's play offers four of the best roles in dramatic literature and director William Morgan has filled them with talented actors.

Mitch Tebo gives a stunning performance as the poetically spirited Edmund. He handles the extremely difficult autobiographical role with finesse, especially in the soul-searching soliloquies of the



Homan, Parker and Tebo in O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*.

writer who "didn't have the makings, just the habit."

Jerry Homan, the older brother, proves his versatility as an actor. His tremendous strength on stage and his interaction with Tebo provide the play's best moments.

Randall Parker, as the Father, seemed stiff and uncomfortable at first, but eased into his role in the third and fourth acts. Jo Hill gave an excellent interpretation of the mother's role, descending into a morphine-

ridden state. Andrea Visuthipal provided a detailed portrait of the Irish maid. Morgan has expertly captured the essence of this drama with his finely detailed directing.

O'Neill certainly has touched it by creating the most beautiful drama of our time. *Long Day's Journey Into Night* continues at Howell Theater through Saturday at 8 p.m.

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