

arts & entertainment



'Sticks and Bones' a tangled, tense production

Review by Michael Zangari

Historical Theatre's production of *Sticks and Bones* was a tangled affair—slow at times and emotionally tense at others.

Bones was the University Studies theatre's first production of this season.

According to director Don Winslow, Historical Theatre was not formed to compete with Howell or Studio Theatre productions.

"Historical Theatre exists as an effort to teach history through the use of theatre. We attempt to provide the audience with an increased awareness of the physical emotional aspects of the human past, as well as contribute to a greater understanding of the intellectual factors," he said.

He said Historical Theatre tries to work with University Studies faculty in order to coordinate efforts with classroom work.

Multi-layered

Sticks and Bones is a multi-layered play by David Rabe. On a broad scale, the play deals with the American family in a time of extreme conflict, the American involvement in Vietnam.

Although the anti-war sentiments are not in the forefront, that vein of interest is powerful.

It is no accident that the family in the play resembles the Nelson family in the old Ozzie and Harriet TV show. The family is complete with Ricky and David, David being the returning blind veteran.

Junior Mark Willy as David provided a credible performance in a difficult role. The combination of David's own sense of guilt and his obsessions with making his family aware of what is going on beyond the family's limited sphere provided the finest portions of the production.

The interchanges between David and Ozzie (Mark Kruger's fine interpretation of the father's own type of trapped existence) gave the play its direction.

Breeches the surreal

The play breeched the surreal. In the end, the family locked David's visions out, and cut David's wrists, providing the play's final comment on the characters' drives and obsessions.

The remainder of the family, Daneane Hunt as Harriet and James Walls as the bumbling and beaming Ricky, were superficial enough to complete the vision.

Live guitar music, provided by David Ware, filled the many blackouts—making them tolerable. The usage of slides as both credits and family gathering slide viewing sessions were nicely handled.

At the beginning of each scene, the actors' actions began from still slides projected on a screen. These unusual beginnings provided a nice touch.

The Historical Theater did a nice job on a difficult

assignment. The slowness of the script hurt, but the obvious limitations they worked under, even to the point of covering the walls of the sets with newspapers, displayed creative sensitivity.

The newspapers, aside from being inexpensive, served to bring a symbolic, everyday reality to the situation.

The next Historical Theater production will be *The One Day of the Year*, an Australian play about conflict, which will be produced Dec. 1, 2 and 3.

Sticks and Bones was the first of several plays that will deal with veterans and related issues.

Surreal 'Alice' is for adult kids

By Carla Engstrom

Did the hookah-smoking caterpillar sitting on the mushroom intrigue you? How about the antics of the Mad Hatter or the Jabberwock?

All of Lewis Carroll's characters will be in the surrealist adult version of the *Play Alice in Wonderland*.

The production will debut at Studio Theatre at 8 p.m. Tuesday and will run through Sunday.

"It isn't children's theatre, but it's written for the child inside everybody," said Randy Parker, director of *Alice in Wonderland*.

The play is about "what Alice finds in Wonderland and what she does there. It's sort of an odyssey taken from *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice Through The Looking Glass*," he said.

According to Parker, Alice's "self-awareness is heightened.

Alice loses identity

"After she stumbles down the hole, she sort of loses her identity. She confronts creatures and learns from them and (learns) things about herself."

The play is a "college-age show and that's who I'm hoping to appeal to. It's an avant-garde play and hard to follow in spots."

Parker said his main concern was to clearly get the play across to people who haven't read Carroll's stories.

The cast is made up of six people. It "presents an actor with lots of challenges," Parker said.

The actress who plays Alice is the only one with just one role. But the other actors play "a variety of roles and all (roles) call for different voices and mannerisms," he said.

Play fits format

The play "fits well into the experimental format down here (at Studio Theatre)," Parker said. "It's an actor's script. It's carried by the actors and what the actors do with the play, not the other way around."

When asked about his directing methods, Parker said he uses Eastern mysticism theories. The theory is taken from Michael Chekhov, son of the Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. It calls for a three-fold consequence, Parker said.

The director tries to get where the character plays the actor, he said.

There is a distinction between actor feelings and character feelings, Parker added.

For example, the Mad Hatter will react in character for the actor.

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Duo has warm reception

There was the usual crowd in the Nebraska Union South Crib on Friday afternoon, with a couple of additions.

Carmen Herrera, carrying a big-bodied Ventura acoustic guitar, and Joni Etringer with a dulcimer, sat up on the stage and proceeded to belt out a nice blend of folk music.

The show was unscheduled, but was part of Union Program Council's Jazz and Java concerts series.

The duo approached Gary Gilger and David Ware of UPC about doing the concert. They agreed.

Herrera and Etringer do some old English folk songs, some original material and quite a bit of Joni Mitchell. Herrera's vocal style closely resembles Mitchell's.

Etringer's soft vocal harmonies and dulcimer add a lot of depth to the duo's power.

Herrera said they had a good time, and enjoyed the opportunity to play in front of people.

They are currently trying to get jobs in Lincoln, and several people in the audience approached them about possible playing dates.

Herrera is a French and zoology major and Etringer is a food and nutrition major.

"I've got too much of an ego to be a music major," Herrera said, laughing.

They are working on playing another Jazz and Java concert in about three weeks.

"With a little planning, we should be able to bring a piano in for the show," Herrera said.

Etringer plays piano and, according to Herrera, it adds to the mellowness of their music.

Herrera said they took the music they performed Friday from a longer list of songs.

"Because of the short notice, Joni did not have time to learn all the words, though," Herrera said.

She also said they do have some more original pieces but are still a little hesitant about doing them in public.

They currently live in the Cornhusker Co-op. They said they practice in the stairwells.

"It adds a nice reverb effect," Herrera said.

Both enjoy performing and have an easy stage presence. Etringer was a little nervous, however, as the two only played together in public once before.

Herrera says there was some talking in the audience at the beginning of their sets, but as a whole, people listened intently.

She got several requests for more Joni Mitchell songs, which she usually sang, but she said that there are some she wouldn't do because she cannot do them justice.

Current plans are to head back to the stairwell until something else comes up.

One-third of Cocteau trilogy on screen at Sheldon tonight

A 1949 French film entitled *Orpheus* will be tonight's presentation of the Union Program Council's Foreign Classics Series.

The film was directed by Jean Cocteau and is the middle piece of this Orpheic trilogy, which also includes *The Blood of a Poet* and *The Testament of Orpheus*.

Cocteau's films are based on the principle that poetry can be drawn most easily from ordinary and everyday events, rather than from the obscure.

Orpheus is based on the classic myth

about a poet who confronts Death. Technically, it resembles Cocteau's earlier *Beauty and the Beast* and is filled with negative images, shimmering mirrors, and slow-motion shots.

In *Orpheus*, Cocteau blends reality and myth, making the film an unusual cinematic experience.

Screenings are at 7 and 9 p.m. tonight in the Sheldon Film theatre. Admission is \$1.50 for the general public and \$1 for Foreign Film Series members.



Joni Etringer and Carmen Herrera played at an unscheduled Jazz and Java concert in the Nebraska Union South C.C. Friday. Although the two practice in a stairwell, they are eager to find bookings in Lincoln.