

Emmy-winning director is enjoying move to stage

By Charlie Krig

Television direction is fun but work on the stage is a refreshing difference, according to Nick Havinga, a 15-year veteran of the video medium. But, after winning three Emmy awards, he thought directing a play for the theater would be a nice change, especially the chance to work with the Guthrie Theater company.

His show, Eugene O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, opened last year on the Guthrie Theater's stage in Minneapolis. Now the play is touring the country and stopped in Lincoln for three performances last Monday and Tuesday.

Havinga, however, is not touring with the play. He's in Los Angeles, working on several television projects. But he took some time for an interview to talk about the play and his work in the theater and television.

"Television and theater work are rather equal but different. They're kind of like apples and oranges," he said. "It's hard to keep your sanity with only television work so I've always felt it necessary to do theater work."

"Theater is ultimately more rewarding because you have more time to find the essence and depth of the play. TV is more mechanical and direction can be reduced to no more than being a glorified traffic cop."

Still, Havinga admitted that "if I were more heroic I would shun TV and go totally theater, but it's hard for a director to do that."

There were some obstacles to overcome while directing the play, too. First, there is the recent O'Neill revival lead by director Jose Quintero and actor Jason Robards, a cooperation resulting in several Broadway productions and a television special of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Havinga said that in the back of his mind he was concerned that audience members would try to compare Quintero's work to his own.

"There was some preoccupation about Quintero but we decided we would find our own values in the play," Havinga said.

Second, the Guthrie stage has an extreme thrust so that the audience almost surrounds the acting area. But on tour, the play will be done mainly in proscenium theaters so Havinga got to direct the play twice.

"I have to think about the play and how I could do it on the Guthrie stage and how to do a four-act structure as a two-act production. There's one act that takes place inside the house. It's a lovely change if you can do it. But, because of the thrust stage we went for a representation of the house and staged the whole play outside the house. The designer accomplished a good deal with it because the set also had to be light and movable for the tour."

"Then, after the run in Minneapolis, I returned to the Guthrie two weeks before it first went on tour. It's always a challenge to be able to re-establish and refurbish a play. It was a rare opportunity to go back to a play, see its strengths and weaknesses and then be able to refine it."

Finally, Havinga had to balance the humorous and serious aspects of the play. "There's a certain amount of tone set in the early part of the play. At the start there's a young performer who really sets the mood and Richard Ramos has a very clear idea of the humor in those moments."

"It's a curious play," he continued. "It's written very strangely. The humor is there; we didn't superimpose it on the play. It's almost two plays in one. We had to synthesize the first part—humor—with the later dramatic parts. It's good for the audience to laugh and enjoy the opening."

"Then we had to work very carefully with those certain moments of transition so that the audience would be able to change from humor to seriousness."

Havinga said he cut parts of the play so it would run more smoothly. "O'Neill's plays can often be improved with some cutting," he said.

"O'Neill makes his characters clean. If you know his preoccupations, his Catholicism, his other plays in this cycle, then you know what he's looking for. I wanted to discuss the play with the cast and come to a mutual decision about the characters instead of just dictating my views. Of course it's always my final decision but if I can collaborate with the actors I'd rather do that."

Havinga's present goal is to establish himself in Los Angeles and continue his television work. He said he recently completed some episodes of *Welcome Back, Kotter* and *Baby I'm Back* in addition to a new CBS series, *Another Day*. But his long-range plans include some dramatic productions.

"I'd also like to do a feature film but so would about 8,000 other people in this business," he said.

But one thing he said he won't do is a television version of *A Moon for the Misbegotten*. Havinga explained that the play needs an intimate medium to match its intimate theme and that the transition to the video screen would make it too distant from the audience and "that would lose its feeling."



Minneapolis Tribune photo

Director Nick Havinga on the set of *A Moon For the Misbegotten*.

daytime THURS THRU WED

MORNING	AFTERNOON	TOONS
<p>8:00 SOZO NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY PTL PROGRAM VARIOUS PROGRAMMING FARM REPORT (FRI.) Answer is Love (WED.) CBS NEWS FARM AND RANCH REPORT NEWS UNO SCENE (WED.) ROMPER ROOM COUNTRY DAY SUNRISE SEMESTER VARIOUS PROGRAMMING BLINKY'S FUN CLUB ARCHIES TODAY CBS NEWS GOOD MORNING AMERICA I DREAM OF JEANNIE MORNING SHOW SESAME STREET FLINTSTONES MCHALE'S NAVY POPEYE GOOD MORNING AMERICA CAPTAIN KANGAROO FLINTSTONES IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30) National Geographic (THUR.), Nova (FRI.) LITTLE RASCALS CARTOONS 700 CLUB SANFORD AND SON ALL MY CHILDREN TATLETALES (THUR., FRI.) Pass The Buck (MON., TUE., WED.) PHIL DONAHUE SHOW NEW ZOO REVUE ROMPER ROOM HOLLYWOOD SQUARES PRICE IS RIGHT BEWITCHED WHEEL OF FORTUNE HAPPY DAYS HAPPY DAYS (EXC. FRI.) Martha's Kitchen (FRI.) LOVE AMERICAN STYLE (THUR., FRI.) Not For Women Only (MON., TUE., WED.) IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30) RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING KNOCKOUT FAMILY FEUD LOVE OF LIFE NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY (THUR., FRI.) Father Knows Best (MON., TUE., WED.) NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY TO SAY THE LEAST \$20,000 PYRAMID</p>	<p>11:30 YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS FATHER KNOWS BEST (THUR., FRI.) Mayberry R.F.D. (MON., TUE., WED.) GONG SHOW CONVERSATIONS RYAN'S HOPE SEARCH FOR TOMORROW MAYBERRY R.F.D. IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30) FOR RICHER, FOR POORER NEWS NOON SHOW ALL MY CHILDREN JIM NABORS SHOW SESAME STREET FARM ACTION DICK VAN DYKE SHOW DAYS OF OUR LIVES CROSS WITS AS THE WORLD TURNS LUCY SHOW ONE LIFE TO LIVE MOVIE "The Gilded Cage" (THUR.), "Miracles For Sale" (FRI.) IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING (UNTIL 3:30) BEVERLY HILLBILLIES DOCTORS GUIDING LIGHT PLEASE DON'T EAT THE DAISIES ANOTHER WORLD GENERAL HOSPITAL GOMER PYLE ALL IN THE FAMILY DENVER NOW MICKY MOUSE CLUB FOR RICHER, FOR POORER EDGE OF NIGHT FOR RICHER, FOR POORER (EXC. TUE.) Phil Donahue Show (TUE.) MATCH GAME FLINTSTONES TOM AND JERRY GILLIGAN'S ISLAND TATLETALES (THUR., FRI.) Pass The Buck (MON., TUE.), Wild Kingdom (WED.) PHIL DONAHUE SHOW (EXC. TUE.) I LOVE LUCY MERY GRIFFIN (EXC. WED.) ABC Afterschool Special (WED.) KALAMITY KATE'S CAR-</p>	<p>ELECTRIC COMPANY (EXC. WED.) Backstage At The Met (WED.) GILLIGAN'S ISLAND MY THREE SONS (EXC. TUE.) NBC Special Treat (TUE.) I DREAM OF JEANNIE (EXC. WED.) ABC Afterschool Special (WED.) NBC SPECIAL TREAT (TUE.) DINAH SUPERMAN MIKE DOUGLAS MISTER ROGERS LEAVE IT TO BEAVER BEWITCHED (EXC. TUE.) BRADY BUNCH (EXC. WED.) BIG VALLEY (EXC. TUE.) BRADY BUNCH (WED.) FAMILY AFFAIR SESAME STREET ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW ODD COUPLE ABC NEWS FILM (TUE.) I LOVE LUCY ROOKIES NBC NEWS BEWITCHED CBS NEWS NEWS ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW OVER EASY</p>

TO PROTECT THE UNBORN AND THE NEWBORN

give to the **MARCH OF DIMES** mothers march

Ad Lib

Entertainment Editor: Pete Mason Cover Design: Liz Beard Layout: Kitty Policky

Ad lib is an entertainment supplement published by the Daily Nebraskan Editor in Chief: Ron Ruggless Advertising Manager: Gregg Wurdeman Production Manager: Kitty Policky Business Manager: Jerri Haussler

Unless covered by another copyright, material may be reprinted without permission if attributed to Ad lib, entertainment supplement to the Daily Nebraskan

Ad lib is distributed Thursdays with the Daily Nebraskan