

## arts/entertainment

## New play by UNL playwright opens Thursday

By Sioux Braun

A new play at a new theater space will be tested this weekend when the Glass Onion Cooperative Theater presents its first independently produced play, *Bingsley-on-Sea*.

Director Phil Stone describes the play as a "black absurdist comedy, in the sense that we find ourselves laughing at things that kind of hurt."

*Bingsley-on-Sea*, by R. Dale Wilson, is a story about an English minister and his wife, Sidney and Cicely, who are vacationing at a beach resort, and who spend an afternoon and evening with a half Polynesian waiter boy, Sammy.

Stone said *Bingsley* "deals with the walls people build around themselves to deal with the facts of their own existence." The play is a study of these three characters, he said, and what they become.

"The play," Stone added, "is about the compromises people make in order to survive in this world as they grow older."

Even though the university is not directly associated with the production, lighting equipment, costumes, and the cast are all from UNL.

The playwright, Wilson, the director, Stone, and actress Judith Pratt have been in the same doctorate program at the theater department for the past three years and became close friends.

Pratt said their close relationships account for the cast all being from the university. "We know what's going on with each other from working together." She said Wilson confronted her about auditioning for the role of Cicely. "It's a fine role," said Pratt, "and there aren't a lot of good roles for women nowadays."

Todd Berger, a full-time university student and employee of the Lincoln Exchange, said Wilson and Stone asked him to audition for the show after they saw his performance in *Cowboy No. 2*.

In response to why his play was picked to be produced at the Co-op, Wilson replied, "when people in Lincoln are looking for original scripts, they inevitably come to me."

*Bingsley* was chosen from Wilson's repertoire because of its small cast requirement and unchanging scene. "We tried to select a play with material to fit here," said Wilson.

"The closest cousin theater has is poetry," he said. "I'm always trying to get closer and deeper into the poetic nature of the material." Wilson said the language of this play is comparable to his own and thus appeals to the intellect, as compared to his most recently produced play, *Penny Dreadfuls*.

The play has no foul language but Wilson said "because of three lines," the actor originally chosen for the role of Sammy quit after their first rehearsal.

Berger, who then had the role of Sidney switched to taking on Sammy's part, and Wilson stepped in as Sidney.

Berger said he was satisfied with the role changes because he felt more comfortable with the character of Sammy. "I think Dale's much more suited for Sidney than I am."

Wilson said director Stone had wanted him to do Sidney from the very beginning. And he said, "Because of rehearsal schedules and limited time, it was the most practical thing for us to do."

Stone said he hoped that "the process is helping Wilson learn more about the script."

By seeing the play through Sidney's eyes only, Wilson confirmed that he had learned plenty. "Instead of forcing my ideas and thoughts on other people, I must now concentrate on my own material."

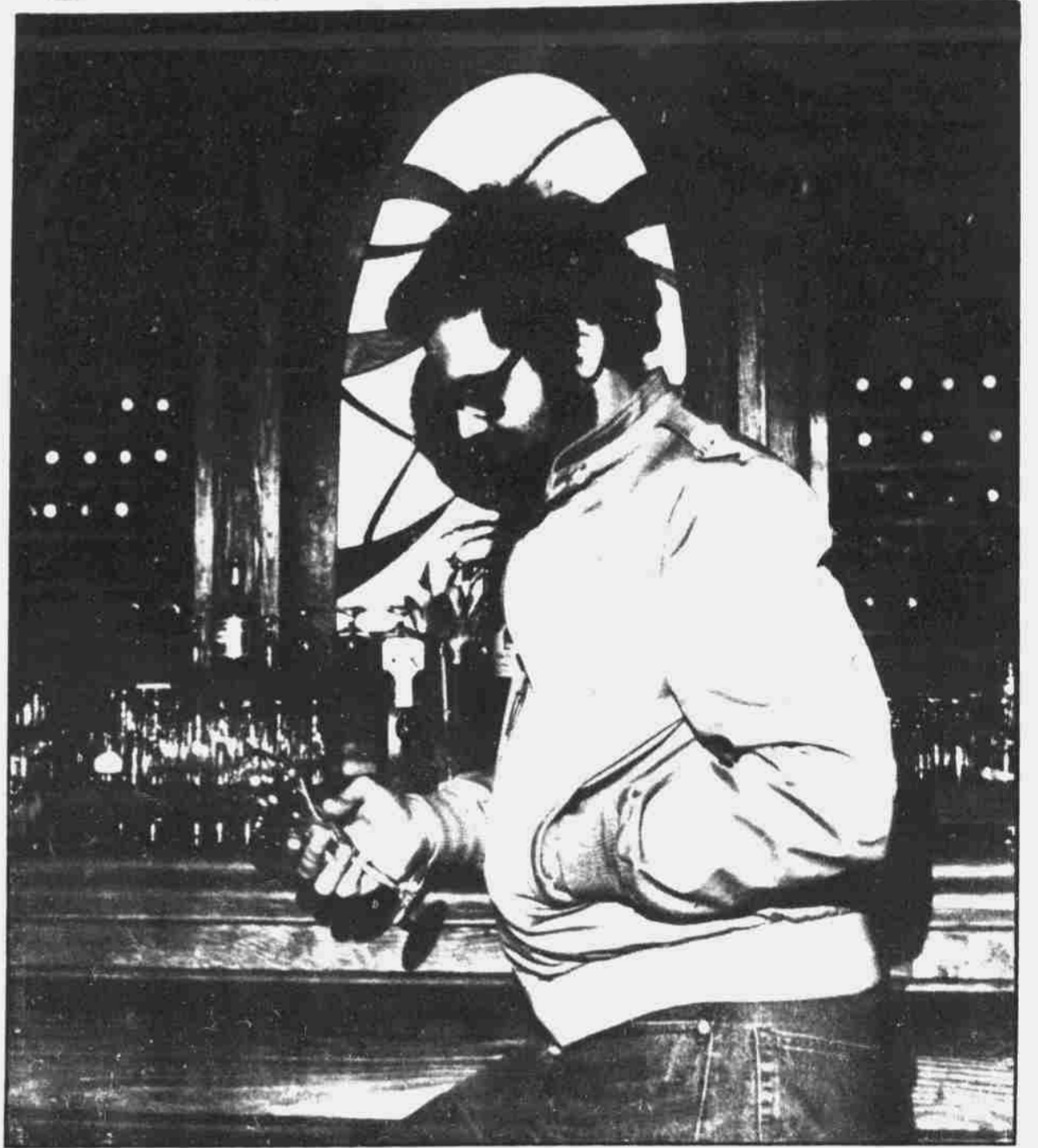
All the cast members agree that Wilson is taking on the job as an actor only, and not as a playwright/actor.

Pratt, who will portray Cicely opposite of Wilson, said "Dale's kind of dashing between hats." But he is primarily participating as an actor, not a playwright, she said.

And director Stone said he doesn't feel intimidated by the playwright when giving directions. "Dale is basically just acting," he said. "His playwright persona is somewhere else when we are performing."

This will be the fourth show in which Stone has directed Wilson. Stone said Wilson accepts his decisions about directing the play. "He will try anything on stage that I suggest. And Dale leaves it up to me if it (the staging) is working or not."

Though Stone admits he senses that Wilson feels an extra bit of pressure by acting in his own play. "It goes along with the thought that if he can't (develop the character of Sidney on stage), then maybe no one can."



Phil Stone

Photo by Jon Natvig

Thus far, the Onion's Co-op Theater has acted as a sponsoring facility for other organizations and their productions.

Starting from a budget of zero, artistic director Sharon Grady said, the theater is financially "going in the hole" for its first production.

Grady's position as artistic director fuses into one of producing director once the co-op changes from a sponsoring to a presenting organization. So she is responsible for the personal loans which have accommodated pre-production costs of *Bingsley*.

The co-op is relying on ticket sales to cover their production expenses. Therefore, according to Grady, "everything must

be kept to a minimal." *Bingsley's* total budget has been estimated at \$200 and so far that amount has been met.

In an interview with the *Daily Nebraskan* earlier this year, Grady emphasized the importance of compensating theater production workers. She said with the long hours involved, people feel more responsible and appreciated if they get some type of financial reward.

So for the benefit of the participants, any ticket income over the amount of production expenses, will be divided among the actors, technicians, and director of the show.

The receipts will be split only eight ways; one cut for the theater, and the rest for the cast and crew.

## Coffee blamed for listener's disinterested attitude

"It looks like a shaved poodle out there. Desolate." Brian blows a slow whistle out the window to the foggy streets. I squint across the table at him. There is a milky wall of cotton candy between us. The fog pours in from an open window by the kitchen and lays thickly around the booths. I pour another cup of coffee like concrete into my cup. "I really shouldn't have any more coffee" I say.

"You shouldn't have had *any* coffee," he says, lighting a match to guide the waitress to the table. She lands like a goony bird. "How are things on fantasy island?" she asks. Brian hands her the pitcher of coffee and says "Under no circumstances are you to bring anymore coffee to this table." She takes it and ambles into the fog like Frankenstein's monster.

## zangari

I nurse my last cup of coffee quietly. Brian divides the remains of his omelet into five easy pieces and pops them one by one into his mouth. He dabs at his lips with the napkin, then with the opposite corner wipes the moisture from his face. He takes a deep breath. Brian has a habit of flagging comments that he deems important, so I braced myself and wait.

"Great ooga booga can't you hear me talking to ya..."

"Temptations?" I venture.

"Ball of confusion?" he says. "To be exact."

"Oh." I say. Actually I knew what song it was, but hate to ruin Brian's choreography. He cracks his knuckles. I am marginally attentive.

"The fundamental nature of the universe is goofiness"

he says, "which will significantly put a damper on what I have to tell you."

I wrinkle my forehead on cue. "Well...?" I say. Brian joins his fingers and brings them to his lips. He looks vaguely like a holy man meditating in the clouds.

He stifles a belch, then begins.

"I'm gay..."

"Brian" I say, "I've only known you for three years, I told you your first stupid stereo-typical art deco joke..."

"I know you know, would you hold on for Christ's sake..."

I had hoped I was going to get off easy. "Sorry" I say.

"This woman" he says "is in love with me."

"So tell her."

"Would you give me a chance?" he yells. "Coffee makes you intolerable..."

I take a last sip and push the cup away. "Ok" I say. "Not another unsolicited word."

"She wants to change me."

"Are you wet?"

Brian picks up a knife and taps it repeatedly on the table as he looks out the window. I almost feel guilty.

"May I speak?" I ask.

"Is there a way to stop you?"

"Beyond honesty" I say, "There's only so much you can do. You are only responsible for other people up to a point, then they have to do the rest themselves..."

"Thank you Jung man," he says sardonically. "She's put her underwear in my mailbox."

"Oh" I say.

"My roommate is wearing them."

"Send her a thank you note."

Brian fans a clear spot through the fog and looks at me. "You're not taking me very seriously" he says.

"I'm really sorry Brian," I say, "but this isn't the first time this has happened. I think people find your disinterested devastating..."

"What do you want me to do, flirt?" he asks. I smile. "It might work" I say.

"I'm perfectly happy doing what I do" he says, "why should I change?"

"Can't imagine..." I say.

Brian shakes his head. "You've been of great aid and comfort to me" he says.

"Anytime" I say.

## Music students to give free concert

School of Music students at UNL will present a recital of chamber music at 8 p.m. Friday, April 24, in Westbrook Music Building, 11th and R streets.

The concert is free and the public is invited. Works to be performed will include Paul Hinemith's "Quintet for Wind Instruments Opus 2, No. 12," Mozart's "Quintet for Piano, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon," and Cimarosa's "Concerto in G Major for Two Flutes and Piano."

Performers will be Kathie Saathoff, Jane Osoorn and Diane Pendrock, flute; Mark Tuttle, oboe; Amy Peterson, bassoon; Mark Benson, clarinet; Devon Park, horn; Margaret Cheng and Robert Rhein, piano.

The Hinemith and Mozart works were prepared under the direction of UNL Professor of Flute David Van de Bogart.