

# 'Rainmaker' shows power of belief in dreams

By Chuck Jagoda

The *Rainmaker* is a play of dreamers, for dreamers. You have to be willing to make the jump beyond logic to a belief in a better you rather than the lowest common opinion of you.

That's what Lizzie finally decides to do and it works. She's no longer plain because she's allowed herself to see herself the way Starbuck and her father do — as pretty. Starbuck's faith in his visions even brings on the rains so badly needed by the drought-stricken farm folk.

The play is admirably constructed and the dialogue is clean and witty. It was a

success on Broadway in 1954 and has been successful many times since; the movie version with Burt Lancaster and Katherine Hepburn is still played on television. The truth that dreams can have is one of those themes that is made for theatrical presentation.

The style of the Guthrie Theater's current production at Kimball Recital Hall reminded me of something out of *The Fantasticks* by way of *Oklahoma!* The actors were often balletic in their moves and watching the show, I had no trouble believing that it had been adapted into the musical *110 in the Shade*. The actors looked like they had strict directional tasks to

fulfill which overrode any tendencies to live their parts. They did fulfill their parts well enough, but one particularly stood out.

Jonathan Fuller, as the young Jim Curry, was infectiously alive. He filled his scenes with the enthusiasm of a kid experiencing everything for the first time. He let me believe he was enjoying himself. He was also quite funny. In the scenes of conflicts of values, the energy and clear blocking worked well. In the scenes of two people learning about each other, I missed the emotion. The composition showed thought and kept up interest. When Noah and H.C. (his father) argued pigheadedly with each

other, they mirrored each other's actions on opposite sides of the kitchen table.

The first act exposition was effective and complete. The sweat stains on the clothes and the smell of the eggs cooking on stage added to its realism.

The set was quite impressive. It suggested the vastness of the land and the textures of a ranch. It was especially impressive in view of the fact that the set has to travel. The use of a combination stove and coat rack that became a desk and coat rack in alternate scenes was quite clever.

All in all Guthrie's production of *The Rainmaker* is an enjoyable evening in the theater. I would recommend it.

## Entertainment notes

*Washington Week in Review*, public television's longest-running series, and one of the most popular, celebrates its 15th anniversary with a special edition tonight at 7 p.m. on the National Educational Television Network.

*Washington Week in Review* producer Ricki Green said the special program will open with a videotaped segment of program highlights through the years.

The retrospective will include discussions with the late Pete Lisagor, a *Washington Week* regular for many years, as well as topics of major importance over the years, such as Watergate, the Camp David

accords, election predictions and views on various administrations.

On the local music scene, the bit news is this: Charlie Burton's first long-player, *Is That Charlie Burton... Or What!?*, is out. The longtime Lincoln rocker and former nationally published rock critic will officiate at a record release party at the Zoo Bar tonight.

The motion picture which helped boost Humphrey Bogart to stardom and changed the course of his career, *High Sierra* (1941), airs on NETV's *Silver Screen Classics* Saturday at 8 p.m.

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by Art Sansom

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