

# Arts & Entertainment

## 'Betrayal': age-old tale with a twist

By Chris Burbach  
Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor

The University Theatre's production of Harold Pinter's "Betrayal" sometimes baffling, sporadically enlightening, occasionally humorous and always intense. The play, as is characteristic of Pinter, has some very funny moments; but the laughter quickly fades before the work's gravity.

"Betrayal" is a tale of an affair between a man, Jerry, and Emma, the wife of his best friend (Robert). The age-old tale of betrayal is told here with a twist, however — the story moves backward in time. The play begins with Jerry and Emma meeting after the affair has finished and ends with the two naughties in Emma and Robert's bedroom at the moment of the affair's inception.

The play climaxes at that moment; all the action which came before, or after in this case, makes sense, previous perceptions are confirmed or discounted and passion peaks during that bedroom scene. Robert goes through almost the entire play with just one facial expression — a sort of vexed glare — and a limited set of vocal inflections to match the expression. But we hear him laughing before he encounters Jerry and Emma in his bedroom. Once in the room, Robert assumes his vexed look, raising questions about earlier assessments of his character and about who is the bad guy.

The play is rife with such intimations and illuminations, though viewers are ultimately left to answer questions for themselves.

Performed in the Temple Building's

Studio Theatre, "Betrayal" has simple sets; some seven or eight pieces of furniture are manipulated to suggest alternately a flat, a pub, a restaurant and other rooms. In such a setting, the burden of portraying real life falls to the players. "Betrayal's" cast bears that burden quite well.

Nancy Marcy is Emma, an unhappily married woman whose extramarital love, at least what we see of it, provides only fleeting happiness. Marcy goes from wistfulness to happiness to sadness, but neither reaches ecstasy nor plunges to bitterness.

In contrast, Robert (Charles Bell) is a bitter man whose only expressed passion is hatred, his other feelings apparently having been destroyed by Emma's and Jerry's affair. Bell's movement and speech were disturbing early in the play; he seemed to be pressing but not quite portraying Robert's feelings. Yet as the story develops, that becomes more a glimpse at Robert than a failure by Bell. Robert's fixed face is a dam holding back a powerful tide of resentment.

Kenneth Page played Jerry, "Betrayal's" most difficult role. Jerry is a seemingly affable character who laughs more than the others and is more of a phony than either Robert or Emma. Page portrays well Jerry's ill-at-ease squirming and false pensiveness as Jerry tries to avoid the truth.

J. Christopher Wineman is, as we've come to expect, excellent in a cameo role as an Italian waiter. His work and that of the other non-principal crew members combine with the players' efforts to create an almost captivating performance.



Photo Courtesy of J. Christopher Winemann

Jerry (right) looks at Emma, his lover and Robert's wife. Robert stands behind. Does Jerry know that Robert knows what Emma knows?

## Songwriters win non-contest

Ratatatatatatatatat... (That's a drum roll.) The envelope please... Ladies and gentlemen, we have winners. I am proud to announce Russ Johnson, Heidi Burkund and Brian Mary as non-contest songwriting victors.

Mary's "Key of E Funk Progression" captured the grand prize for incorporating punk, rap and country western. Burkund's attempt at combining the three categories garnered her second place in the noncompetition, and Johnson's "Ticks" took third.

Although there were many entries, very few adhered to the categories, which is fine — I said there were no rules. But this dynamic made me unable to award individual category championships, so there are just three winners. And here they are!

### "Ticks" by Russ Johnson

I went out to mow the lawn  
I said, I went out to mow the lawn  
Oh yeah, I went out to mow the lawn

Yeah, I went out to mow the lawn.  
I looked at my hand, what did I see  
A goddamn tick just a crawlin on me.

So then — I went out with my girl  
I say I went out with my girl.  
Now I went out with my girl  
I say I went out with my girl  
She ran her fingers through my hair  
She said, you got a big tick crawling  
around in there.

So now — I went out with my spray  
I said I went out with my spray  
Now I went out with my spray  
Yeah I went out with my spray  
I sprayed my yard with all my might  
And now there isn't a damn tick in sight  
(Screamed) Ticks, ticks, yeah, ticks, ticks  
(Repeat infinitely.)

Untitled by Heidi Burkund  
Capitalism drains your blood  
from your head  
Rain on Mondays makes me blue  
Corn prices this year are dead  
All I can think of is you.

Oh baby, life sucks  
Oh baby, does life ever suck.

Anger and hate will kill us all

If high blood pressure don't get us first  
Just stop to smell the roses this fall  
And listen to the slow mournful  
wail of a train on its  
way to Cincinnati.  
Oh baby, life sucks real bad  
Get out of here before I pound your head  
in.

And the winner, the song I will sing in  
the shower,  
"Key of E Funk Progression"  
By Brian Mary

Farmer Jones he had a pig, EIEIO  
With a grunt, grunt here and an oink, oink  
there.

Chorus: EIEIO. Down on the farm get  
down get down get down get down on the  
farm EIEIO get down EIEIO on the farm  
EIEIO get down EIEIO on the farm.

And old farmer Jones sez, Li'l Piggie I'm  
lookin at you with nothin but love you  
may believe. "Yippie Ki Oh" And it is not  
with malice that I tell you, baby you must  
die so that I may live. Uh Huh.  
And then the pig sez, Farmer Jones, I  
know the score that's what you've kept  
me livin' for. Just keep in mind when  
you've scarfed me down, that's only half  
the merry go round. With a grunt grunt  
here and an oink oink there.

Chorus

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## Cards and Letters

Is it not a point of pride of the Daily Nebraska that you are known for your objectivity and accuracy of all that goes into your Daily?

Allow me to assume that one, this is true and, two, answer one question for me. It concerns Randy Wymore's Oct. 8 review of U2 *The Unforgettable Fire*.

Q. There is nothing I can say about your sure and certain dislike of Brian Eno, Wymore, but I question your credibility as a critic by asking this: Why did you even attempt to review this album objectively when you obviously owned a very biased opinion of producer Brian Eno even before removing the

new album's shrink wrap?

Producer Eno is an innovative studio genius, and Eno's dark, synthetic, eerie layering highlights this album. It also complements a very fine performance of the band. Today, when most popular bands are becoming drudgely commercial, I find myself respecting U2 for its valiant attempt to give refreshing new life to its always strongly emotional albums. Don't confuse this as a "wimpish" attempt to "...pick up the gauntlet to save the world."

Tom Zillig  
freshman

## BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

