

Arts & Entertainment

'What's a few less dollars?'

Starve or be a star; Joyce Welsch prefers the former

A good deal of philosophy stands behind the method actor. Indeed — a great deal of philosophy. But as there is good and evil — heaven and hell, so to speak — there are also two sides of the coin in acting: dichotomy one might label systematic and observational.

Systematic actors have a mental card catalog with a cognitive etching of each emotion, personality and dialect. They act each to a tee.

Observational actors have not yet completed the mental catalog of their trade they are still learning.

Joyce Welsch, a senior UNL theater major who has performed in numerous productions, aligns herself in that transformational stage of observation.

"Everything I do is based on observation," Welsch said. "That's one of my biggest weaknesses."

And why not lead off with a big weakness? Any football player could tell you that everybody makes mistakes.

Right. Now the mud has been properly slung — at the beginning — on to the hard-core realism. How's an actress, like any creative professional, going to deal with the harsh equations realities that arrive every month from LBS and UTA?

Naturally, the next question for an actor is: Los Angeles or New York?

"I would go anywhere but New York or L.A.," Welsch said. "More of

a compromise, like Seattle or Boston."

Yet she definitely prefers the cathode ray tube to the silver screen. My bet is "L.A. or bust" within the next 10 years.

Welsch holds true to her self-inflicted

way? That question will draw the rhetoric from any discourse among stage (or film) sophisticates. Welsch believes the stage belongs to the actor . . . little wonder why.

The directors at UNL, she said, practice what she terms "non-directional directing," a new concept in stage production to the best of my limited knowledge of theater. The director shows up only for the first night and helps only with the initial staging.

"We never get notes after opening night," Welsch said. That ideology contradicts the normal stereotype of the director — a red-faced lunatic who runs between the light crew and the stage hands babbling out imperatives.

Maybe someone should be there to critique. We're talking about a multitude of half-full Bodexes.

Criticism, constructive or otherwise, is of the essence to an apprentice of the stage. But for the moment, introspection will have to suffice.

"You have to be a critic of yourself," Welsch said, "I almost wish I could videotape myself." Pause. "But that might hurt more than help," she said with a slight giggle.

But where are the goals? What objective, concrete-laden steps to the top does she have?

"I would never again want to do 'A Christmas Carol,'" she said. "You can tell them that is my biggest goal."

Unveiled

by Kevin Cowan

conviction of poverty.

"I don't expect to make any money . . . what's a few less dollars?" she said. That she doesn't consider herself suited physically for American commercialized film by no means douses her hopes of attaining celluloid recognition. She also wants to avoid the "stardom" that plagues recently discovered stars like Ally Sheedy.

Welsch will be a paid actress this summer with the Nebraska Repertory Theater. Yes, in America, it's hard for educated poverty addicts to stay away from the fruits of the bourgeoisie.

"I just want to do it or fail," she said. And succeed she must. Acting appears to be the only thing that truly matches Joyce's interest. Her world is audience response, and her mode of communication is the stage. Ah — the stage. Whose is it, any-



Ward Williams/Daily Nebraskan

Joyce Welsch

Studio Theatre's 'Fifth of July' sizzles



Joe Sampson and Bruce Tinker in Lanford Wilson's "Fifth of July."

By Scott Harrah
Arts and Entertainment Editor

It's not often that a play can completely delight some audience members while it shocks and disgusts others. Lanford Wilson's endlessly provocative "Fifth of July," currently playing at the UNL Studio Theatre, does just that.

In the opening scenes, handicapped Vietnam veteran Kenneth Talley Jr.

the precocious 13-year-old daughter of June Talley (Jenny Barron). Shirley is a little annoyance to everyone, running around the house wearing feather boas and telling about her future career as a serious artist.

And there's Weston Hurley (Brad Schluterbusch), a burned-out hippie who amuses everyone with a fable about Eskimos, whale blubber and a miraculous fart.

After the first act, the play takes a serious turn and evolves into a bitter melange of broken dreams, shouting matches and the compromises Kenneth must make in his life as he learns to deal with the fact that he's handicapped and may not be able to continue his teaching career. What also surfaces are hidden secrets that go back to the friends' Berkeley days and the causes and ideologies that seemed to elude their world after the '60s.

The issues and the eccentricities of the characters — Kenneth's homosexuality, Gwen's profanity — are somewhat controversial for a Midwestern audience, but they highlight the characters and make them profoundly realistic and modern.

The cast is simply consummate. Joe Sampson is both believable and effective as Ken; Jackson Warren's portrayal of John is emotional and effusive. Lettie VanHemert as Gwen is often scene-stealing, and she adds a warm veneer to such a complex character. One of the best performances is Cindy Totten as Sally, Kenneth's older aunt. With perfectly hunched shoulders and poignant facial expressions, she obscures the obvious fact that she's really a young woman playing an older one.

"Fifth of July" is an honest look at the idealism and ideologies of a more progressive generation that has much meaning in the Reagan '80s. It is also one of the better productions the UNL theater department has performed in a while.

"Fifth of July" runs through Saturday with performances at 8 p.m. Consult the Temple box office for ticket information.

Bertonecini, White to play tonight

Preview by Geoff McMurtry
Staff Reporter

Noted jazz and classical guitarist Gene Bertonecini will perform at Kimball Hall tonight in a duo with UNL music professor and bassist Rudy White. White and Bertonecini have known each other for about nine years and have played together before most recently the summer they spent together at the Eastman School of Music.

Bertonecini has played duets as

often as possible during the last 10 years.

He also has played in larger groups with Benny Goodman, Tony Bennett, Lena Horne, Buddy Rich, Clark Terry, Michel Legrand and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

Listeners often remark about his unique, tightly structured style,

which he attributes to his architectural studies at Notre Dame.

Commenting on the varied influences of Bertonecini's music, White said, "It's more of a chafing to cover a wide territory."

"When you draw from a variety of sources, it makes it a fresher outlet for the listener," he said.

Bertonecini and White will perform at 8 p.m., admission free. Bertonecini will also conduct a master class for UNL music students Tuesday.

Concert Preview

Bennett, Lena Horne, Buddy Rich, Clark Terry, Michel Legrand and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Listeners often remark about his unique, tightly structured style,

(Joe Sampson) sits at his desk as his gardener/boyfriend Jed Jenkins (Bruce Tinker) walks over and kisses him. An overall-clad Missouri hick kissing a handicapped guy evoked some surprised stares from the audience. Also disturbing to some were the numerous four-letter words and topics that illuminate the lovable eccentrics in this serio-comic drama that parodies Southern gothic, '60s radicalism, wealth and greed in the Tennessee Williams school of comic neuroticism.

Beautifully directed by Bill Trotter, the story centers on a 1977 Independence Day reunion of late '60s Berkeley radicals in Lebanon, Mo. The friends share memories, monolithic amounts of cigarettes and booze and feelings about the current state of their lives.

Although the plot is sometimes thin, the colorful coterie of friends more than makes up for it with aphorisms and actions that display their many quirks.

There's Gwen Landis (Lettie VanHemert), a flamboyant, trashy singer married to John Landis, (Jackson Warren), Kenneth's old pal who runs around in polyester leisure suits that would make even Wayne Newton faint. Gwen is a charming, campy woman who cusses during each sentence, chain-smokes constantly and worries about her upcoming record deal as she cavorts through the house dressed in gaudy '70s outfits that make her look like she came out of a foul-mouthed episode of "Rhoda."

Lillah Grund plays Shirley Talley,