

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Theatrix takes a darkly poetic look at relationships

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Several fragmented poems are weaved together to portray one man's journey from falling in love to falling apart.

Sam Shepard and Joseph Chaiken's play "Savage/Love" was originally written for a one-man solo reading, but Theatrix director Jeanne Long decided to make it more theatrical by adding music and nonverbal skits.

Long made two male and two female actors work together to depict one man's trials with love. The four actors portray one couple at two different times. The man (Byron Bonsall) and woman (Melissa Clausen) reflect on their relationship in the past as a younger man (Robb Goff) and woman (Jill Doolittle).

Long said she still liked the poetic nature of the play because it added emotion

and intensity. After seeing the play a few years ago, Long said it influenced her life.

"Everything constructs love as a romantic fairy tale, and being the cynic that I am, I don't believe in happy endings," she said. "This play kind of destroys that."

"Savage/Love" is a deeper, darker look at how love is not always pleasant and constructive, she said, because it shows how love can ruin people.

The play challenged her interpretive nature, Long said, because Shepard wrote the play from a deep, personal level.

Long said it was difficult for her and the actors to determine the show's actual meaning, even though she could tell it held a general appeal.

Bonsall said he struggled with the meaning and poetic format of "Savage/Love," but

he said it provided him with the most fun he had had working on a performance.

"Anybody who has performed Sam Shepard anyway would say 'I don't know what Sam was smoking when he wrote this stuff,'" Bonsall said, laughing. "It's very obscure, with a lot of metaphors."

He said personally he had a hard time with poetry but enjoyed the serious subject matter.

Bonsall said it was easy for him to relate to the play because he saw many of the incidents mirrored in his own life.

"I was in a relationship in college, and my girlfriend and I played all these little mind games," he said. "One minute we'd be yelling and screaming, and 10 minutes later everything was fine, and it was as if the argument never happened."

Quik Facts

Show: "Savage/Love"

At: Studio Theatre, Temple Building

Times: 8 p.m. today, Friday and Saturday; 2 p.m. Saturday

Tickets: \$2 at the door

"Everyone who has ever been in a relationship will be able to identify with some aspect of this play."

"Savage/Love" opens tonight at 8 p.m. in the Studio Theatre in the Temple building. Additional performances are 8 p.m. on Friday and 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Saturday. Tickets are \$2 at the door.



Jeff Heller/DN

Alexei Kazantsev, an artist-in-residence at the Surya Art Gallery, works on a painting Wednesday at the gallery.

Gallery is artist's 'home'

By John Fulwider
Staff Reporter

Surya Art Gallery is not like most art galleries.

Amrita Mahapatra, the owner, said the gallery was like an extension of her own house.

"Every time I have a new art show, it's like I'm decorating a new house," she said. "The paintings just seem to belong."

The Lincoln gallery has an international focus, she said.

"We specialize in international art — art not only from different parts of the world, but art that portrays different cultures," she said.

The building housing the gallery is much different from the usual. It is not a normal "museum with four walls," as Mahapatra calls regular galleries. Instead, a restaurant formerly stood in its place. The huge, wood bar is still in place.

Mahapatra said she opened the

gallery in January 1992 because her home was overflowing with her art. She already owned the space the gallery now occupies.

"We had the space; why not fill it up?"

Even the gallery's artist-in-residence is unusual.

Mahapatra said Alexei Kazantsev, from Moscow, showed up at the door of her gallery one day holding a rock he had picked up along the road. He knew only one English word: "yes" — and with difficulty told her that he wanted a place to sculpt.

"He reminded me of myself when I came to the United States, so I let him in," she said.

The rock was converted into a beautiful sculpture in one week, Mahapatra said, and that convinced her to let Kazantsev stay.

For Kazantsev, who creates limestone and marble sculptures and oil paintings, art is life, Mahapatra said.

"His lifestyle reminds me of Van Gogh," she said. "Without the craziness, of course."

The gallery also includes many of Mahapatra's own works. She said she liked to depict everyday things rather than grand, universal themes — in contrast to Kazantsev's work.

"Alexei is always so philosophical," she said.

However, one of her paintings in the gallery, "Wise Men from Asia," has a deep meaning for Mahapatra.

In the painting, she depicted a story she heard as a child about six blind wise men who touched an elephant in different places on its body; and from that touch, each man came away with a different perception of the animal.

"They were all right in a way, but also very wrong," she said.

When Mahapatra came to the

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Card game gathers would-be wizards

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

"Magic: The Gathering," a trading card game started by Wizards of the Coast Inc., has become so popular that it is difficult not to suspect some kind of arcane help.

The game was introduced first in August 1993, and a cult following has driven it into a fully mainstream success.

According to Carrie Thearle, the marketing representative for Wizards of the Coast Inc., the game originated after the company's president, Peter Adkison, asked a man named Richard Garfield to make a "game that was easily transportable and could be played in a short time."

The result of Garfield's effort was the original deck of Magic. Five expansion sets and almost 800 new types of cards later, the game is being played all over the world.

"It is sold in every state and in other countries," Thearle said.

The game allows players to use their imagination to simulate a battle between wizards. This is

done through the cards, which consist of lands, creatures, artifacts and spells.

Players can incorporate any one of the five different colors as well as artifacts to build a deck to match against another or several other players.

"There are so many different varieties," Paul Nguyen, a junior electrical engineering major, said.

"It's a challenge trying to beat other people by using different strategies," he said.

Rob Michaelis, a senior mathematics major, said that he enjoyed the game because it always was different.

"With over 1,000 different types of cards, it's not likely to be played the same twice," he said.

The fifth expansion set for the game, "Fallen Empires," recently was released, and the booster decks are being sold almost as fast as businesses can order them.

"This latest expansion was four times as large as 'The Dark,' our last expansion set," Thearle

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Playhouse presents Advent of absurdity

By Paula Lavigne
Senior Reporter

Three successive Christmas parties turn into domestic disasters as three couples search for more than just holiday spirit in "Absurd Person Singular" at the Lincoln Community Playhouse.

The play is broken into three acts, each depicting a different scene in a different couple's kitchen.

The first scene unfolds in the spotless kitchen of Jane and Sidney Hopcroft (Liz Banset and Scott R. Glen). The Hopcrofts have just come into financial prosperity and marital bliss and are trying to impress their wealthy friends.

Eva and Geoffrey Jackson (Susan K. Garrett and Kent Krueger) serve as hosts for next year's party as their lives and their mar-

riage start falling apart.

The pill-popping psychopath Eva can't even succeed at her zany attempts to kill herself over her insensitive lout husband.

The play ends in complete absurdity in the Victorian kitchen of Marion and Ronald Brewster-Wright (Peg Sheldrick and George Churley) when Marion emerges drunk in a pink nightgown to entertain her guests.

"Absurd" contains a mixture of humorous comic bits, but the action moves too slowly at times to blend them together. Parts of the characters' dialog bog down the humor.

Apart from needing some work on their British accents, the actors succeeded in developing their characters and their relationships.

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