

Thanksgiving spirit depicted in Futz play

By PATRICK MINER
Theater Critic

Those who are looking for a play with some excitement, tremendous acting, and a fantastic script should look no further. The Futz Theatre, 124 S. Ninth St., is showing a presentation that will certainly satisfy anyone's appetite for drama and wit.

"Someone Who'll Watch Over Me," a play written by Frank McGuinness and directed by Paul Pearson, opened last Thursday.

The play is a depiction of three men trapped in a Lebanese prison. The three political prisoners are an American doctor (Ward Lewis), an Irish hothead and writer, (Brad Boesen) and an English literature professor (Kent Krueger). The men come from three very different backgrounds and lifestyles, considering their native countries, and aren't accustomed to getting along in a situation in which they must.

Set upon a stage that is almost totally bare, the three-member cast is left to create the tone of the play on their own. The players are given two holy books, some water and pillows, and they take the action from there. The actors use the setting and take full advantage of it, giving three incredibly believable portrayals.

There is never a dull moment, as changes between highs and lows within the men's psyches occur frequently. The tension of the play is great, sprinkled with rudimentary bits of comic relief.

The performances by Boesen and Krueger are amazing. A friendship by mutual respect endures, and the two actors portray it to its finest. Lewis' role is also spectacular, providing a tremendous supporting role for Boesen and Krueger.

The presentation is a perfect tribute to the Thanksgiving season. By showing three men who are forced to live in a setting that is less than humbling, the play encompasses a meaning of Thanksgiving that cannot be put into words.

This is a definite must-see play for everyone. Even those who rarely attend plays will enjoy the wit and charisma displayed by Pearson's masterpiece.

The play will continue from Thursday through Sunday. All shows begin at 8 p.m., except for the Nov. 24 show, which begins at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10. Reservations can be made by calling the Futz box office at 435-6307.

Protesters riot to uphold Indian values

BANGALORE, India (AP) — Police wearing riot gear blocked protesters from marching to a hotel where Miss World contestants are staying and arrested 800 of them.

The protesters, mostly women, were detained for about two hours and released after receiving a warning. The women argue the beauty pageant is demeaning and contrary to Indian values and culture.

Police stopped the marchers 1½ miles from the hotel where 88 contestants are staying, said Police Commissioner Sharat Chandra Bur-

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Animation mixes well with reality

By CLIFF HICKS
Film Critic

Combine a sports legend and an Academy Award-winning cartoon character and you get "Space Jam."

Michael Jordan stars as himself with Bugs Bunny in "Space Jam," the first animated/live-action film since the less than successful "Cool World."

The plot? An alien theme park (run by Swackhammer, who is voiced perfectly by Danny DeVito) is out of interesting attractions, so it decides to abduct the Looney Tunes.

Of course, the aliens are little tiny things, so the Tunes challenge them to a game of basketball. This would've been a sharp idea, except that the aliens steal talent from five NBA players and change into big monsters, er, Mon-Stars.

Jordan is, of course, a baseball player at this time, so he's spared from the talent abduction, and Bugs, being the sharp-eyed, long-eared fellow that he is, abducts Jordan during a golf game with Larry Bird and Bill Murray.

Sound silly? Yep, it is, but what else can you expect from a cartoon movie? It always seems that when a film studio tries to blend cartoon animation with live-action, there's too much of one or the other.

"Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" was a great film, but the live-action strongly dominated the scene. "Cool World" was not so great, but took place mostly in the animated world as opposed to the real world.

"Space Jam" tries to blend the two and does so fairly well. Until Jordan gets abducted, the film moves a little slowly, plodding through the setup for



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNER BROS.
BILL MURRAY, Bugs Bunny and Michael Jordan talk basketball strategy in Warner Bros.' live-action/animated comedy, "Space Jam."

the story that could've been a bit shorter.

When they yank him off the golf course, however (and best of all, Murray and Bird don't overly flip out), things start to get going.

Sure, Jordan can hoop it up, but can he act? The answer is — well enough. First off, he's playing himself, so the acting stretch is limited. Secondly, his major co-stars are all animated. This cuts him a little more slack. And finally, it's not like this is Shakespeare or anything.

There are some severe changes from the cartoons of old, however. Bugs and company look more realistic, more fleshed out. Animation has come a long way since Bugs' debut 56 years ago (or since his Oscar win in 1958 for "Knighty-Knight Bugs") and "Space Jam" reflects what artists today can do.

And finally, there is a lady in Bugs' life — Lola Bunny. Lola is the newest

of the Tunes and probably one of the most interesting. Even though she's a Tune for the '90s, she fits in perfectly with the old gang.

Do not, however, think this is only a film for kids. Kids will not get the "Pulp Fiction" reference, nor many of the other jokes which are aimed at a slightly older audience.

One thing Disney taught the competitors: Get all of the audiences, not just the kids. You can indeed teach a rabbit new tricks.

A couple of subtle things appear in the film that kids won't catch either, beyond the obvious references. If you listen to the alien who stole Muggsey Bogues' talent, you'll hear traces of Bogues' speech style.

Bugs and Daffy also have this great conversation that almost gets lost in the background about never having seen any share of the money from all the stuff sold with their images on it. You'd almost think they were human.

The Facts

Film: "Space Jam"
Stars: Michael Jordan, Bugs Bunny, Wayne Knight, Bill Murray
Director: Joe Pytka
Rating: PG (animated violence, "Pulp Fiction" reference)
Grade: B+
Five words: Starts somewhat slow, finishes strong

Also, there are a lot of cameos — Charles Barkley, Patrick Ewing, Muggsey Bogues, Larry Johnson and Shawn Bradley are the five basketball stars who have their skills stolen. Bird and Murray appear at the golf game, and in fact, Murray plays on the court with Jordan and Bugs near the end.

"Space Jam" is just a fun film. It's not high art, it's not a masterpiece for all time, but it's the first real Looney Tune in years. That alone makes it worth the price of admission.

N.I.L.8 thrashes with fragile porcelain mice

By ANN STACK
Music Critic

Musically speaking, Illinois was well-represented at Knickerbocker's Friday night.

Fragile porcelain mice and N.I.L.8, two hard-core bands from Belleville and Springfield, Ill. respectively, redefined live energy with their hour-long sets.

N.I.L.8, especially, put on an amazingly intense show. Although Friday's gloomy weather put a damper on attendance figures, there was still a decent-sized mosh pit, complete with thrown punches and angry bouncers.

This is a band that's been around for 10 years, still with the original lineup, and it was easy to spot some late '80s, early '90s influences in their punk-thrash format. If you take the

sound of an unpolished Anthrax, and throw in the energy and goofiness of Scatterbrain, that comes close to hinting at N.I.L.8's brand of punkadelic.

"This is a song about a guy from our hometown of Springfield named Jeff Stryker," lead singer Jevf said. "He's a porno star now."

Mixed with the zaniness of songs about porn stars and '70s early-morning TV icons (the Sid and Marty Croft-inspired "Land of the Lost") were many with political messages, including "Political Suicide" and "Old MacDonald's Straight-Edged Dilemma," about a "farmer who had good focus and a capitalist society screwed him over," Jevf said.

N.I.L.8's set became tighter as they progressed through material from their four albums, including their forthcoming CD set for release in early 1997, "Doug."



PHOTO COURTESY OF FUSE RECORDS
THE MEMBERS OF N.I.L.8, from left, are known only as Bruce, Eric, Jevf and Walnuts.

N.I.L.8 is an innovative, aggressive band definitely worth checking out the next time they breeze through town. Fragile porcelain mice came on shortly afterwards, with singer Scott Randall in a checked spandex jumpsuit

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