

Play finds smiles in everyday problems

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Senior Reporter

Have you ever felt like everyone around you is completely insane? Like you are stuck somewhere in between reality and fantasy?

Jasper has. As the lead character in the play "Somewhere in Between," he confronts the mental friction of others on a daily basis.

"Somewhere in Between," a romantic comedy written by Craig Pospisil and directed by Beth Muehling, revolves around Jasper, an everyday guy unhappy with his life.

The show opens tonight at the Futz, 124 S. Ninth St.

Through a series of encounters with "extraordinary" people, Jasper finds the strength to continue on and find happiness. Along the way, he meets the woman of his dreams.

"Jasper is like Charlie Brown," cast member Laura Nettland said. "All these bad things happen to him but he finally gets the red-haired girl in the end."

Muehling said "Somewhere in Between" was a conscious move away from the dramas she normally directs at the Futz.

"It was time for me to do a heavy-duty comedy," Muehling said. "My past productions have been serious looks at life through the eyes of women and children. This is light, soft, sweet and romantic."

Muehling described the play as

Theater

"Seinfeld"-esque: Ordinary characters confront ordinary problems.

"It doesn't talk about anything in particular, but it has something to say," she said.

Cast member Kelly Sheridan said the normalcy of the characters made them easily identifiable to the audience.

"These people aren't the brightest or the luckiest or the best-looking people," Sheridan said. "They're average. (The audience) should find hope in the happiness of these ordinary people."

While the cast members worked to portray the reality of their characters' conflicts, last week's storm offered them some real-life hassles. Rehearsals - first moved to Muehling's house because of a lack of space elsewhere - were delayed and moved again because of the power outage.

Luckily, the play follows typical black box theater style with minimal set, costumes and props, Muehling said. The only extensive technical element is the use of sound effects.

"We pulled a lot of stuff that we were originally going to put in," said Dana Wheatley, who plays Jasper. "It's been a bit of a challenge learning the timing, but it really amplifies the acting."

Because of the play's light tone, Muehling said the only thing she wanted the audience to take away from the production was a

smile.

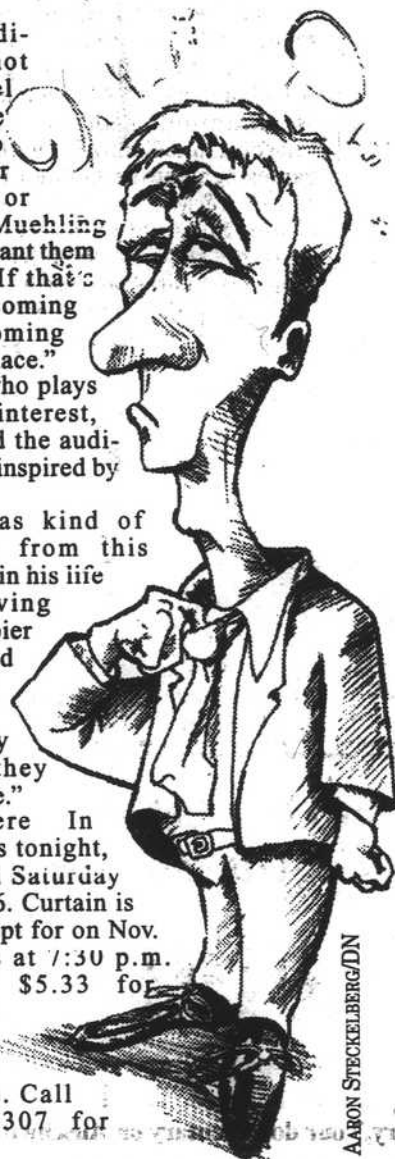
"(The audiences) are not going to feel like they have answers to world peace or world hunger or the deficit," Muehling said. "I don't want them to have that. If that's what they're coming for, they're coming to the wrong place."

Nettland, who plays Jasper's love interest, said she hoped the audience would be inspired by Jasper.

"Jasper has kind of moved away from this unhappy point in his life and is moving towards a happier time," Nettland said. "I hope it encourages people to really find what they want out of life."

"Somewhere in Between" runs tonight, Thursday and Saturday and Nov. 13-16. Curtain is at 8 p.m., except for on Nov. 16, when it's at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5.33 for tonight's performance and \$10.65

for all others. Call (402) 435-6307 for reservations.



Music



House of Large Sizes
"Glass Cockpit"
What Are Records?
Grade: B+

Rock is gathering moss.

Both national and local acts are receiving less and less attention from once avid listeners as album sales have continued to slump for the past few years. Reasons for the disinterest in modern rock are both obvious and disputed. Many cite the rapid rape of grunge rock and the advent of industrial-age techno as the primary reasons for the slow vaporization of rock 'n' roll. Others claim rock music raped itself, and the offspring is, of course, incestuous - spawning duplicate mutant pop bands and a harem of angry guitar sisters.

In the midst of the decay and confusion, rock music has been divided and replicated in a number of vague faces such as alternative, grunge, pop, ska and techno. Leery of mainstream success by personal favorites or disgusted by the genre-oscillation of previously respected musicians, music fans are increasingly walking away from the scene altogether.

But hope is always close to home.

While rock continues to wither, some groups are breathing new life into old ideas. Among them is the farmhand hard rock sound of a legendary Cedar Falls, Iowa, band, which has just released a new album of ethanol-inspired and punk-derived guitar-god rock.

Long-standing Iowa rock foundation and road-band spectacular House of Large Sizes continues to reach skyward by returning to its base: the guitar, embraced like an old friend on its new album, "Glass Cockpit."

Not that the guitar was ever left behind in the 11 years the band has been touring and recording. In fact, its reputation is based on a pleasingly abrasive mix of The Who, Aerosmith and barnyard punk rock; and this newest effort bears many features of its progenitors, plus a veritable Brach's bag of previously unheard hard pop candy.

"Glass Cockpit" is a shiny work of sticky guitar hooks, rock howls and jaded rural pride accompanied by an exploration of classic rock tradition and noticeably pointed lyrics. Bassist Barb Schilf's tough vocals and heavy instrumental presence is also a welcome emphasis of the three-piece band, which has experimented with her role as vocalist in the past.

Telepathically as tight as three people can be and not share the same skin, HOLS gained notoriety over the years for blindingly entertaining live shows fueled by a love for classic guitar and noncommittal youth-oriented messages.

The band's first album in three years and the third since 1986, "Glass Cockpit" flies through 15 homegrown rock cuts with jubilant three-chord brilliance, heavy bass and lyrics reminiscent of teen-idol acts like Sonic Youth.

In an age where popular music is becoming increasingly less so, rock 'n' roll is struggling against the trappings of music store labeling, top 40 schlock rock and worn-out imagery.

Available at Homer's locations, "Glass Cockpit" is a refreshing and occasionally brilliant collection of classic rock inspiration, punk rock attitude and contemporary ingenuity.

-Bret Schulte

LIFE IN HELL

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GROENING

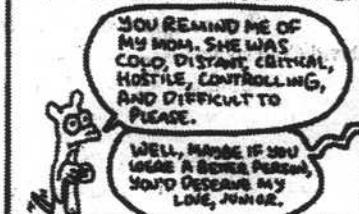
WE CHOOSE OUR LOVERS FOR A WIDE RANGE OF REASONS, RANGING FROM THE COLDLY RATIONAL TO THE DESPERATELY NEEDY.



SOME OF US MAKE OUR SELECTIONS PURELY ON THE BASIS OF MUTUAL INTIMACY AND SHARED VALUES, WHILE OTHERS SEEK OUT DESTRUCTIVE LOSERS WHO MATCH UP WITH OUR FEELINGS OF SELF-LOATHING AND WORTHLESSNESS.



TRY AS WE MIGHT, OUR ROMANTIC CHOICES OFTEN REFLECT UNCONSCIOUS LONGINGS FROM OUR DEEPLY DAMAGED CHILDHOODS, AND WE MAY END UP MAKING THE SAME PAINFUL MISTAKES AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN.



WE MAY BELIEVE WE SEEK ONLY THE DEEPEST EMOTIONAL CONNECTION, YET FIND OURSELVES DRAWN PRECISELY TO THOSE POTENTIAL MATES WHO EXHIBIT THE MOST PAINFULLY OBVIOUS PERSONALITY DISORDERS.



STRANGELY, WE MAY BE ATTRACTED TO THOSE POSSIBLE PARTNERS WHO ARE THE MOST MANIPULATIVE, UNSTABLE, OR DOWNRIGHT PSYCHOTIC.



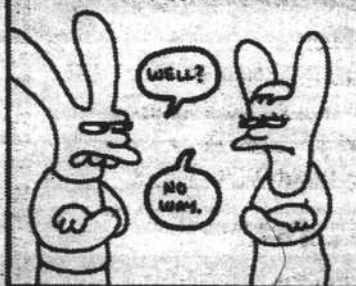
OR WE MAY CHOOSE SOMEONE WHO IS CONSIDERABLY FLAWED WITH THE MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT WE CAN GET OUR LOVER TO CHANGE TO THE WAY WE WANT AFTER A COMMITMENT HAS BEEN MADE.



KNOWING ALL THIS, WE CAN CHOOSE OUR SOULMATES BASED ON TRUE LOVE, SHARED INTIMACY, MUTUAL GROWTH, AND BREATH-TAKING PASSION.



ALL WE MUST DO IS CONSTANTLY BE CONSCIOUS OF THOSE THINGS WE ARE TOTALLY UNCONSCIOUS OF.



GOOD LUCK! YOU CAN DO IT!

