

# Cast brings life to 'Human Remains'

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER  
Senior staff writer

## Theater Review

It's an ode to love in all its many forms.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln's production of "Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love" explores love's overwhelming grip on our lives in both its presence and its absence.

The play, produced by the Department of Theatre Arts and Dance, opened last Thursday and continues tomorrow through Saturday.

The cast, one of the most well-rounded of the season, gave the play an alluring frankness, bringing the poor souls to life despite the gaps and contradictions inherent in the script.

In the play, David and Candy are two roommates struggling to fill the voids in their lives. Desperate for love, Candy latches onto anyone who comes along, while David tries to drown his pain in sex with strangers.

As the two lose themselves in a series of destructive relationships, the audience sees their true emptiness and loneliness develop.

Candy gets involved with a lesbian and a married man, while David tries to work out his feelings for his best friend Bernie and his young co-worker Kane.

In the background, a serial killer ravages the city, sexually torturing and killing young girls.

The play is carried by a snappy, hardy energy, exuded best by Amy Jirsa in the role of Benita.

As the psychic, fun-loving dominatrix, Jirsa filled the play with a bouncy frankness. Her jovial delivery of morbid horror tales contrasted her candid talk of sadomasochism, making her the one character who really saw and understood all.

Jude Hickey played the sex-charged but self-possessed David, serving as a foil to Candy and her emotional turmoil.

Hickey showed off his character's outrageously blunt sense of humor well, using it to mask David's inner confusion and conflict until the end of the play. At that point, Hickey gave a

shatteringly clear expression of David's true feelings, bringing the play to a fitting and subtle end.

Eric Moyer's Bernie provided a smirky contrast to Hickey's David. Moyer skillfully developed his character beyond the mere reckless drinker and philanderer the audience first sees. The script leaves some gaps as to the true nature of Bernie's feelings for David, but Moyer fleshed these out as best he could through his physical interaction with Hickey.

Courtney Shaw played Candy, the self-loathing bulimic. Shaw was able to handle the smart sassiness Candy struggles to emanate, but her best moment was in the second act.

Here, Shaw depicted her character's complete self-revulsion after Candy's binge session. Standing in the middle of the stage, sweat pants covered in crumbs, Shaw cried out "Do you think I'm fat?" The extent of her self-hatred and obsession during this moment was heart-breaking.

Jacob Terrell played the wide-eyed Kane, David's star-struck companion. Terrell's innocent delivery and confused expressions brought relief and a refreshing naivete to the show.

All of the characters handled the serial killer subplot well, giving it a legitimacy not to be found in the script. Without knowing the playwright's intent to have the serial killer represent AIDS, this subplot can seem over dramatic and unnecessary.

This is complicated by the poorly

developed reasons for the killer's actions. The killer's confusion with his sexuality and disillusionment with his life lack the urgency needed to justify his psychotic reaction.

Overall, the play was staged very well, giving ample space and prominence to each scene. However, during the climax, the audience on the left side of the theater couldn't see either character's face. The characters maintained the same stance for most of their dialogue, leaving part of the audience without the facial reactions of this crucial scene.

The cast also adeptly handled the play's explicit sexual content, choosing to cut out all of the nudity.

Love scenes and displays of violence were honestly portrayed and tension was punctured by moments of comedy and sadness.



MATT HANEY/DN

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- 1) Monday, April 19, 1999, 1:00 - 3:00 pm, City Campus Union
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An important goal of the Commission is to help improve campus life for people of color at UNL. These forums are meetings to provide an opportunity for the university community to converse with the Chancellor and other UNL administrators about issues that you find pertinent. Your input will help improve our campus.

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