

Repertory Theater earns world-class reputation

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"But, at the same time, the level of professionalism at this university is higher than a lot of other places that I have seen."

"Sylvia" provides a good example of youth and experience working together. The title character is played by Ashley West, an actress who has performed in various companies nationwide, as has actor Richard McWilliams, who plays Greg in the play.

The university faculty also takes part. Virginia Ness, an alum of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London and a former teacher at the Yale School of Drama, brings a sense of tradition to the production. Ness is currently a teacher of voice, clowning and acting here at UNL and joins a great number of fellow faculty members who have been a part of the Rep's extensive company.

Moyer has a resume of 15 productions and exemplifies the role that students play at the Rep. After graduation Moyer plans to move west to Los Angeles to pursue a career in film. Apart from his studies here, Moyer said he has learned a great deal from his work with the professional actors and directors.

Brant Pope, the director of Sylvia is also the director of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for actor training and the associate artistic director of the Asolo Theatre Company. By being removed the UNL theater program, Pope offers an outside perspective. He sees The Rep as a significant transition between student productions and the professional theater.

"I think that there's a certain standard level of production that the Rep requires," Pope said. "Someone finishing their work here at Nebraska like Eric (Moyer) can step in and play a role alongside professionals from the outside is the idea of the Rep."

One fact actors have to learn to accept about a career in acting is that instant fame is seldom found. When asked what roles he would expect in Hollywood, Moyer jokingly responded that he would most likely be the "third henchman from the left."

This sense of practicality is vital to those who wish to pursue a career in



theater. The simple truth remains, a career in the theater is far from being an assured profession as "Sylvia" Stage Manager Jeff Allen explains.

"No matter how much talent you have, no matter how much somebody can put on stage, unless somebody likes you or unless you have that niche often times it doesn't work," Allen said. "Professional versus educational, it all becomes a blurry line and they do a nice job of teaching that here at the Rep."

While the cast and crew are indicative of those involved in the Rep's productions, "Sylvia" is not. This is because of the Rep's tradition of diversity. Including William Shakespeare, Neil Simon, intimate productions and lavish musicals, the Rep has run the gambit. Also, from the determination by those involved with the Rep, it doesn't look like this theater company will be taking their final curtain call any time soon.

