

Childhood story comes to life

BY SARAH SUMNER

Tweedledee and Tweedledum, Humpty Dumpty, the Mad Hatter and the Queen of Hearts are just a few of the characters that jump from words to action in a Theatrix play.

Theatrix, a student-run program in which graduate and qualified undergraduate students produce and direct shows, opens "Alice in Wonderland" today and will run through Saturday. The play is at the Temple Building Studio Theatre, 12th and R streets. Tickets are \$4 at the door, and the show begins at 7:30 p.m.

The set, designed by Thomas Machan, consists of a black backdrop, a large treasure chest in a corner, a larger table and oversized children's blocks that spell out ALICE.

The blocks have five other sides that are painted to represent designs like chairs, a fountain and a door. The set is simplistic, with lights that help change the characters from scene to scene, said director Greg Peters.

"I've really been fascinated with

the ideas of open spaces and of the audience's use of imagination rather than on restricting ourselves to realistic settings," Peters said.

The script, originally from the Manhattan Project theater group, was created in the 1960s. The scene of Tweedledee and Tweedledum was later inserted in the play by Theatrix.

The dialogue was taken from the book, and the staging ideas were left open, Peters said.

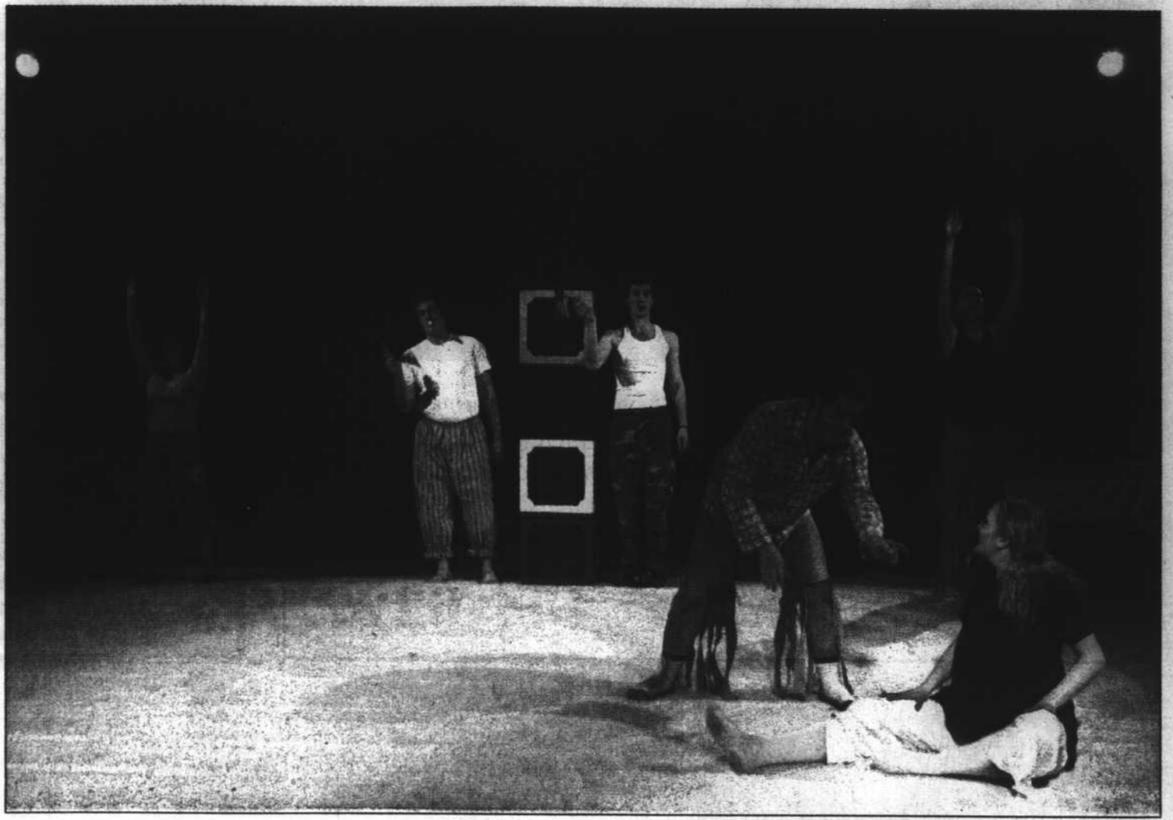
This show initially started last winter as an independent project and was proposed to Theatrix and accepted. But the director and an actor left the production. The students involved with the play wanted to continue, so the director was replaced, actors were cast, and they have been practicing for three weeks.

The cast consists of seven actors who play a number of different characters and, at times, act as a chorus for Alice. There is a lot of boisterous yelling, horse-play and close, physical contact between the characters.

But at its root, the play exists to touch the viewer's inner child, said Daryn Warner, managing director of Theatrix.

"This production touches on the child in each of us," he said. "It's exiting to feel the youthful honesty and candor that Alice experiences."

Stephanie Dodd, who plays Alice, has enjoyed the freedom and devel-



opment of her acting and directing abilities.

"Theatrix has been a great organization for us to use," Dodd said, "because it has given us the freedom to do a script that we've all wanted to do that wouldn't be possible for us to do anywhere else."

The liberal production is acted and directed with a lot of input from the actors, and new choices are continually being suggested to improve the play, Dodd said.

"The show itself changes completely every night," she said. "The energy changes, the blocking changes, the ideas change, and so, with the audience's energy there, I really don't know what the show is going to be like."

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Steven Bender/DN TOP: Michael Dragen speaks directly to Alice (Stephanie Dodd) in Carroll's adaptation of "Alice in Wonderland." LEFT: UNL senior Stephanie Dodd plays Alice in the Theatrix production of "Alice in Wonderland." The student-directed play opens tonight at the Studio Theatre in the Temple building.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Steak Escape

Type: Grilled sub shop

Where: 12th & P

Entree: \$4.8

★★★ of 4 stars

Steak joint passes test of service

BY J.J. HARDER

It's one of the worst case scenarios for a restaurant worker: 10 minutes to close, the grill is shut down, everything's cleaned and the dining room is empty.

The employees probably have plans to go out with friends; they can't wait to rip off their aprons and lock the door. Then, like a bad dream, someone comes in. It's the customer's first time in the restaurant, so he takes a while ordering. And he and his friend order a few different things from the menu.

The true test of a fast food restaurant isn't getting your food to the customer in less than three minutes; it's not having each chair in its place and every wall scrubbed clean. The real test of a restaurant is the 10-til-close drill.

I'm proud to report that Lincoln's newest fast-food chain, Steak Escape, passed with flying colors. The staff kept their smiles after I came in, and when I apologized for coming in so late, one worker told me not to hurry at all, and he genuinely meant it.

Steak Escape is a grill that serves Philly subs and steak fries. It was started nearly 20 years ago in Columbus, Ohio. Today, the restaurant has locations in 30 states, as well as Lebanon and Singapore. Steak Escape offers a very limited menu of nine sandwiches, potatoes, fries and salads. And while you can probably write the entire menu on the palm of your hand, less quantity doesn't necessarily mean less quality.

In fact, the sandwiches at Steak Escape are quite enjoyable. Meat is cooked first and heaped on the sandwich. If you usually order a foot long at Subway, you may want to try a 7-inch at Steak Escape. The Wild West BBQ is a mountain of sirloin strips topped with tasty barbecue sauce.

The Grandest Chicken is grilled chicken, onions, mushrooms, green peppers and provolone. The meat is very tender, and the vegetables are obviously fresh. My favorite sub is the Hambrosia - ham grilled with pineapple and served under melted Swiss. If you like Hawaiian pizza, you'll love this sandwich.

The ingredients are cooked right in front of you, which makes you even hungrier for the sub you're about to eat. And the person preparing the sandwich asks you what you want on the sub; this way there is little chance for incorrect orders.

I would rate Steak Escape's sandwiches ahead of Doozy's, Subway and Blimpie, and about even with Jimmy John's. Steak Escape subs are grilled, so they take longer to prepare. But the final product cannot be rivaled by the two or three microwaved hoagies at Subway.

Steak Escape gains votes when it comes to sides. Steak Escape offers thick, hearty steak fries. They have a taste that has kind of a smokehouse flavor.

Smashed Potatoes are the eatery's only venture from the norm - they're baked potatoes smashed and topped with chicken or beef and vegetables.

Steak Escape prides itself on emulating the true Philly cheese steak, but it doesn't really accomplish its mission. There is no Cheese Whiz in the restaurant like I'd find at Pat's or Gino's in South Philly. And there is definitely no blue-collar Philadelphia attitude (it's not a Philly steak if you don't get yelled at while ordering).

Unfortunately, Steak Escape's prices aren't student-friendly either. A 12-inch sandwich is \$6 and \$8 in a combo meal. You really can't eat for under \$4.

Remember that Steak Escape passed the 10-minute-til-close test and that the sandwiches are big and filling. The service is great and the fries are, too. But unless they pass the I'm-so-broke-I-have-to-give-plasma-test and lower their prices, Steak Escape won't be on anyone's weekly lunch list.

PERFORMANCE PREVIEW

Alice in Wonderland

Where: Studio Theater Temple Building 12th & R

When: Tonight-Saturday 7:30 p.m.

Cost: \$4

A tribute to women in aviation

■ The SAC museum displays a wide variety contributors.

BY MAUREEN GALLAGHER

The newest exhibit at the Strategic Air Command Museum proves that behind many great airplanes there was a great woman aviator.

The exhibit, titled "Women and Flight," is a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institute.

The exhibit consists of biographies of 36 women aviators and astronauts. "Women and Flight" utilizes both photographs and interviews to present the life of each woman and outline her contribution to the field of aviation.

Carolyn Anderson, Director of Marketing at the SAC Museum, said the museum was pleased to host an exhibit that presented a wide variety of aviators.

"The exhibit provides a real cross-section of women who have contributed to and taken part in the field of aviation," she said.

"Women and Flight" details the lives of women from all walks of life. Skywriters, crop dusters, aerial photographers, cattle herders, pilots in the U.S. Armed Forces and astronauts will all be included in the exhibit.

Specifically, Shannon Lucid, an astronaut who set an American record for length of time in space, and Ellen Paneok, an Eskimo bush pilot from Alaska, are featured. Paneok will be in Omaha Dec. 12-16 as a guest of the SAC Museum and will be making several public appearances to share her experiences as a female aviator.

Paneok also will journey to Lincoln during her stay to speak to women's organizations in the Union Auditorium on Dec. 13.

Anderson stressed the significance of the exhibit and the importance of recognizing the accomplishments of women in aviation.

Her thoughts were echoed by



1st Lt. Krista Bonino prepares to fly an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter in Germany. This photo is just one of many on display at the Strategic Air Command Museum's "Women and Flight" exhibit.

Stephanie Lewis, the president of UNO Women in Aviation.

Lewis, who plans to pursue a career in aviation, said "Women and Flight" is important to the field of aviation.

"There's definitely a need for more women in aviation because there aren't a lot of women in the field currently," she said. "This exhibit should help to get rid of some of those stereotypes about aviation being a man's field by showing what women in aviation have accomplished."

Anderson also said the quality of the exhibit's photographs, taken by Carolyn Russo, a staff photographer at the National Air and Space Museum in

Blur compilation strays from band's originality

BY NEAL OBERMEYER

Compilations are notorious shortcuts to buying all of a band's albums. Compilations save you the time of having to get to know "non-hits." Compilations are a nice way to sell a new song or two when you can't be bothered to write a full album.

That said, if you want a good review for your band's compilation album, you're fighting an uphill battle, so at least make it have a point beyond "ideal Christmas gift for the music enthusiast."

Blur has a new compilation. It's called "the best of ..." and ooh it's archetypical all right. The biggest hits, all but one were singles, and the obligatory new song are here.

It went without saying that the band would have no problem assembling an album full of awesome songs, Blur has basically ushered the British indie scene through the paradigm shifts of the 90s: dawning in the drug-induced indie-dance madchester days ("There's No Other Way"); writing the rules for the infamous 'Britpop' era ("For Tomorrow," "Girls and Boys"); and destroying their own creation, killing off Britpop ("Beetlebum") and allowing the more "serious" Radiohead and the Verve to fill the Top of the Pops vacuum of '97 brought about by the absence of Menswe@r and Sleeper.

And it's all here. Moments from every one of blur's drastically different musical pitstops are represented. It was inevitable that somebody's favorite song would have to be omitted for time reasons, but the selection is as good as can be expected with those constraints.

And, bless their hearts, they strayed from the singles-only format and included the godlike album-track "This is a low." As

MUSIC REVIEW

Blur

Title: "Blur: The Best Of"

Label: Food Records 2000

★★★ of 5 stars

far as quality of content goes, these are five-star songs from a career of five-star albums.

So why is this compilation a failure?

It's because, despite being one of the most consistent and creative bands of the last decade, the most inspiring element of the Blur story transcends any one particular song.

Who would have listened to the derivative "I know" and "Bang" in 1990 and ever imagined that in eight years this coat-tail band of Stephen Street scenesters would hook up with William Orbit and make an album of analog synth whines, vacuum cleaners, and gospel choirs? Jesus Jones sure didn't.

But Blur did. And yes, other bands evolve, too. After 15 years or so, U2 got interesting for one album, but then they sort of lost the plot. REM followed a similar let's-stop-being-boring-now-adult-contemporary-radio-is-where-it's-at. Get the point?

Bands get comfortable with their sound, fans get bored, so they calculate a reinvention. But with every sonic redirection Blur takes, they get better and more relevant. Not since the Beatles has a band been so successful at growing and taking their peers along with them.

So it is that progression from madchester to Britpop to artsy post rock to whatever "music is my radar" is what makes Blur

EVENT PREVIEW

Women and Flight

Where: SAC Museum I-80 exit 426

When: Saturday, Jan. 14 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Cost: \$6 Adults

Washington, D.C., is first-rate. "We feel very pleased to host such a quality exhibit," Anderson said.