

THEATRE

Review:

Good comedy, great drama

Are you drunk, Roy?
Is it Friday night, Roy?
It's Friday night, Roy.
Then I'm drunk, Roy.

To call James McLure's one-act play *Lone Star* a comedy is a little misleading. True, the genius of this play is that it makes you laugh; and the extraordinary portrayals by local actors Ken Hof, Dan Bruno and Chris Pinto make you laugh. But the themes are serious themes—manhood; manhood in Maynard, Texas just after the Vietnam War; going to Vietnam; not going to Vietnam; coming home.

The play opens with rednecked cowboy Roy (Hof) in a drunken monologue, addressing the stars outside the local bar. He is soon joined by his little brother Ray (Bruno) and later by their nerdy friend Cletis (Pinto). It soon becomes obvious that Ray and Cletis simply idolize Roy. Roy got all the girls; Roy had the pink Thunderbird convertible; Roy went to Vietnam.

Ray: They wouldn't take me. You know I had football knee.

Roy: What you had is football brain. And when you're too stupid to get into the Army, you're too dumb to breathe. Now that's what I call dumb.

Ray: Not so dumb I didn't go to Nam and get myself shot.

Roy: What did you call it?

Ray: Nam. That's what you call it.
Roy: Don't try to be cool. You can't say Nam. You weren't there. It's Vit Nam to you.

Ray: Vit Nam then. I didn't get my ass shot off in Vit Nam. That's for damn sure.

Roy: All I know is: I served my time.

What follows is a sometimes heated, sometimes moving, sometimes hilarious interaction between the two brothers, as they reminisce, remember, and finally reveal themselves to one another.

Performances by the three actors are outstanding. Hof and Bruno are believable as brothers; they achieve the right amount of tension and affection. Hof growls and stalks around, bigger than life, tough and sentimental. Bruno plays kid brother Ray with sympathy and humor. Pinto's a great wimp in his salmon colored polyester suit and patent leather loafers!

The play itself, under the direction of Bill Reid, is captivating and contemporary. If any problems existed with the production, it may have been the choice of Edison's Bar (or any bar) for such a serious piece of comedy. Or perhaps Edison's Bar at 47th & Main in Springfield is just too remote for Eugene's theatre crowd. In any case, there were no more than 25 people there the night we went, and according to Dan Bruno, it was looking better

than the previous weekend. "Hey, looks like we're into the double digits tonight," he quipped before the show. But in the best tradition of theatre, the show went on, and the 25 or so of us in the audience were treated to some really fine, rewarding drama.

Bill Reid directed ORT's production of *Lone Star* in 1981. A veteran Eugene director and actor, he will appear in ORT's *Greater Tuna* which opens this week. Ken Hof and Dan Bruno appeared together in ORT's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Hof as Chief Broom and Bruno as McMurphy. Hof was also Roy in ORT's *Lone Star*. Bruno is a member of On The Edge.

Lone Star has closed at Edison's Bar, but will be produced again at Maude Kerns Art Center for two more weekends, November 14-16 and 21-23. For a sampling of some of Eugene's best theatrical talent, don't miss *Lone Star*.

You OK?

Yeah.

You puke?

Yeah.

It all came up?

Yep. It all came up. The beer, Cletis, Elizabeth, Vit Nam, my car, you, me.

Breathe some of this night air, you'll feel better.

—S.U.

CINEMA

Plenty

Starring Meryl Streep, Charles Dance, and Sting.

In *Plenty's* opening scene, a young English woman is in charge of coordinating the action at a clandestine parachute drop by the RAF into occupied France in 1943. Meryl Streep is Susan Traherne, competent and self-controlled, with grave responsibilities despite her youth. She is human and vulnerable, nevertheless. Director Fred Schepisi allows the life-and-death atmosphere of wartime to color the love affair between Susan and the unexpected British soldier who literally lands on her turf, making their brief fling seem even more seductively romantic and emotionally charged. David Hare's screen adaptation of his prize-winning play follows the idealistic resistance leader for the next 20 years as she tries to accept the social and political realities of post-war Europe. The film skips from one time period to another without any warming; some viewers will find this disconcerting. Watch Streep's fashionably authentic clothes and hairstyles for clues to the era; you'll probably be looking at her anyway—she's simply beautiful at every opportunity.

Susan Traherne's self confidence and leadership qualities are not seriously regarded by the men engineering Britain's recovery from the war. Relegated to secretarial positions, she soon realizes equality was a temporary phenomenon forced by the war. Susan goes a little mad and never quite conforms to life after the war, bringing grief to her lover (Sting), her best friend (Tracey Ullman), and her husband (Charles Dance). Tracey Ullman as the bohemian girlfriend is surely a strong can-

didate for Best Supporting Actress. Singer, songwriter, actor Sting is good as the surprisingly sensitive lower-class lover Susan approaches with a baby-fathering scheme. Charles Dance is Raymond Brock, her wealthy diplomat husband whose very conventionality and propriety make him a perfect foil for her excesses. Dance is the British actor best known for his role as Guy Perron in last season's PBS miniseries *The Jewel in the Crown*. There are only quality actors in this film: John Gielgud, Ian McKellan, and Sam Neill round out an excellent cast.

The critics almost universally applaud Streep's performance. *Time* magazine (10-7-85) captions her photograph "Mad housewife" and writes:

"As the frustrated house wife with bloody nothing to do, Streep gives her fiercest, most controlled performance since *The French Lieutenant's Woman* . . . she is a character with surprising edges and dark corners."

REVIEW

Plenty is a puzzling, quirky production. David Hare's script is murky—"overly fragmented and ambitious" is how critic Joy Gould Boyum puts it (*Glamour*, October 1985). Despite conceptual problems, the picture succeeds in showing us a powerful woman whose transition to a peacetime life is fraught with emotional dangers she cannot overcome. Streep's portrayal of Susan Traherne is reason enough to see *Plenty*. As Boyum notes in her review:

"... it's not often we come across a heroine of Susan's stature—a woman motivated by the kind of all-consuming idealism movies usually reserve for men."

—Lois Wadsworth

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