

'Look Homeward Angel'

Characters good but play lacking

By FRED CRAFTS

Emerald Entertainment Editor

A rich, beautiful and moving play has been fashioned from the pages of Thomas Wolfe's distinguished autobiographical novel, "Look Homeward, Angel," and somehow Eugene's Very Little Theatre has managed not to breathe any life into Ketti Frings' glowing dramatization.

"LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL" is drama that ranks with Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman." Under an almost sentimental guise of nostalgia, violence, tenderness, hatred, humor, and love, the play so expertly offers conflict and reality that instead of simply telling a story of the hopes and desires of a group of people, it becomes a gigantic emotional adventure.

In spite of several masterful performances, the VLT has turned what could have been a very rewarding evening—for those with enough courage to face some of the ugly and wonderful facts of life—into just another play. Miss Frings' splendid artistic creation was not intended for those desiring escapist entertainment. Yet the tragic beauty that lies in its many and varied situations, ranging from scenes of wild humor to emotions of selfless love and deep grief, some to the audience through an almost melodramatic interpretation.

William Austin, as Eugene, etches an unforgettable portrait of the lamblike yet bitterly courageous youngest member of the Gant family. Nina Newman is magnificent as the selfish, calculating mother who uses her husband and children as stepping stone for what she considers will bring her happiness and security.

Bob Stankavich, who performs his role with great insight and technique and who emerges as the play's most believable character, is splendid as the consumptive son.

LOOK HOMEWARD ANGEL, a comedy-drama by Ketti Frings, based on the novel by Thomas Wolfe. Directed by Otilie Turnbull Syebolt; scenery by Eyer Brown; lighting by Howard Ramey; costumes by Julia Hebert; sound by Roger Hougum; production stage manager, Perry Thaxton. At the Eugene Very Little Theatre.

Eugene William Austin
Ben Bob Stankavich
Mrs. Pert Dena Salmon
Hugh Charles Coleman
Helen Cyra Hinze
Eliza Gant Nina Newman
Will Pentland Eugene Salmon
Jake Clatt Ivan Smalley
Mrs. Clatt Mabel McLain
Florry Mangle Ruth Fischer
Miss Brown Helen Jones
Mr. Farrel George Northam
Laura James Laurie Fischer
W. O. Gant Rudy Pfeiffer
Dr. Maguire Dwight Newman
Tarkington Ethan Newman
Madame Elizabeth Gerda Brown
Luke Don Nutting

Rudy Pfeiffer who wrenches much humor from the role of the gravestone-cutting, shrew-ridden, hard-drinking father and Cyra Hinze as the daughter contribute superior work.

THE PLAY concerns Eugene Gant, a young writer growing up among insensitive townfolk, including his mother's family, who are too busy hoarding, sleeping, and feeding to recognize or understand his genius. Although the words are spoken and the struggles dramatized, the notion of an emotional awakening was not

realized by Wednesday night's audience.

In such as the deathbed scene, when, through pettiness, confusion, rancor, fury and horror, the Gant family draws together "in a superb communion of love and valiance," obvious technical errors and unimaginative dramatic reactions detour the audience's attention away from the core of the play.

THE DRAMA relies almost entirely on emotional effects rather than a well-developed story line. Yet, because of the over-modulated background music, the expressionless lighting and the handling of extremely emotional—in places nostalgic—sentiment, the play's emotional appeal is destroyed. What interest in the Gant family the audience manages to salvage through the technical mistakes wanders further due to extreme pauses between scenes. Perhaps all this will be corrected during the run of the show.

While perhaps Wolfe's finest novel and Miss Frings' best play, "Look Homeward, Angel" is, unfortunately, not the quantity production of which the Very Little Theatre is capable.

Summer projects interviewer here

Justier Frost, representing the workcamps in the United States, American Friends Service Committee, will be in the YWCA lounge in Gerlinger all day Monday to talk with anyone interested in participating in summer projects sponsored by the AFSC, the YMCA, the YWCA, or the Ecumenical Voluntary Movement. Use Emerald Classified Ads—Phone DI 2-1411, Ext. 618.

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Literary criticism talk set Tuesday

W. J. Handy, English professor at the University of Texas, will give an address on literary criticism Tuesday at 4 p.m. in the Student Union. The address, "Toward a Formalist Criticism of Fiction," is open to the public.

Handy is an associate professor of English and director of the program in criticism at the University of Texas.

This is the first in a series of lectures sponsored in connection with the National Defense Education program in contemporary literature.

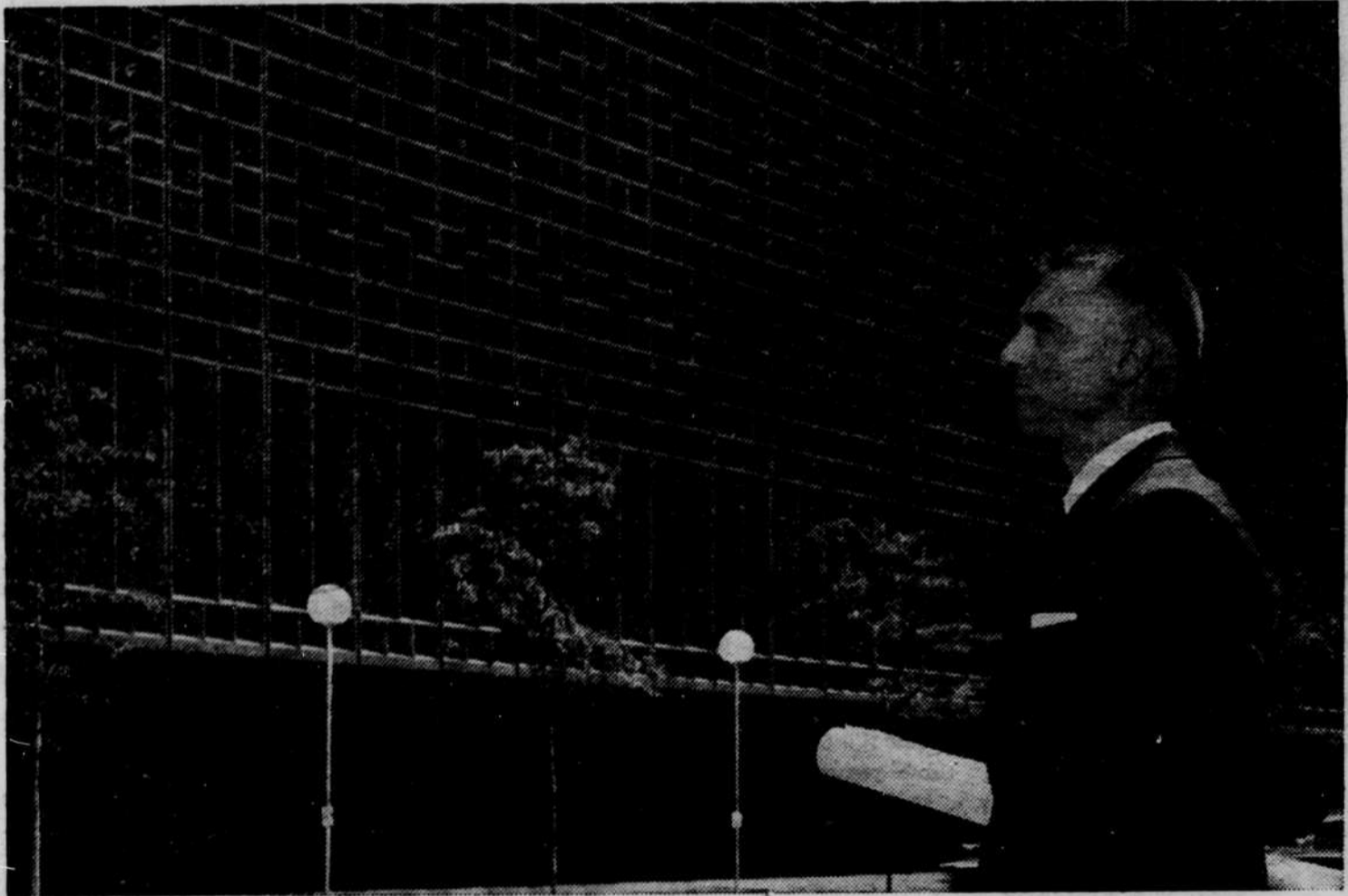
Contemporaries

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beginning of the school year was that no one would be allowed in the Commons wearing jeans. This rule, however, does not seem to be taking effect. On any given day, in any given meal, one can find many of the men on campus who are wearing jeans and sweatshirts, eating in the Commons.

If this type of a rule does not pertain to the men, why can't the women go to meals wearing "neat grubbies"? The makers of the rules should get together and see that these regulations set forth are either followed or disbanded.

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