

On stage audition first step to theatrical glory

By JOCK HATFIELD
Of the Emerald

"I'm in my prime and the girls are benefiting from it," intones Miss Jean Brodie, who only moments ago was a nervous student trying out for a play.

She clearly is not a student anymore. Like the others tensely waiting to play the part of someone other than themselves, she has lost herself in a created character. Her voice builds to a crescendo, "To me, education is leading out what is already in the pupil."

"Okay, fine," breaks in the play's director Thomas Gressler. No one applauds, and Miss Jean Brodie becomes a student again.

So begins the first audition for what in six weeks will be a student presentation of "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie" by Murial Spark.

"There will be six weeks of rehearsals," warns Gressler before the audition, "three weeks of five days a week and the last half six days a week. Keep this in mind and leave if you're not willing to put in the time."

But the 30 students seated in a half moon of desks in 201 Villard are more worried about surviving the audition than what comes after.

"I don't think I can do it," says one freshman who quickly vanishes out the door. Another, asked to put his name on a sheet of paper, writes his phone number.

Julie Akers, a student who says she has had previous experience with auditions, was more composed. "It's natural to be nervous in the beginning," she says, "but after you start watching the others and see how bad some of them are, you'll say, 'I can do better,' and you'll want to get up and try."

Gressler calls out the names of several students and a scene for them to act. "I wouldn't like to have sexual intercourse," one of them reads.

During the reading, Gressler sits in the back of the room making critical notes on pieces of paper. "What I'm looking for is a psychic understanding of the material and voice control," Gressler explains. "I'm looking for talent."

Gressler says casting the play is particularly dif-

ficult because most of the characters are 11-year-old girls, "and I have to find 18 and 19-year-olds who look the part."

Occasionally, Gressler will burst out with a "Marvelous, I love him and I hate him," referring to a student's execution of particular role, or will give an aside to a student — "You have a part in this play." But in general, his reactions will remain unknown until a "call back" list is posted the next day.

Most of the potential actors did not rehearse for the audition. "I hadn't even read the play before I came in," says Mike Ryan, who received one of the male roles.

Many of the students have not had any previous college acting experience. "I did some acting in high school and loved it," said a woman trying out for a minor role. "I heard about the audition and just decided to come over."

Others, such as drama major Jan Powell, auditioned for their parts between rehearsals for other plays. "I've been in about 25 plays here at the University," she says.

After the first round of auditions, tension eases and the students become involved in their roles. One woman, accidentally given a role to read which was no longer in the play, cried out with anguish, "I'm Mary? But that means I'm dead!"

Although Gressler has each student read from the same scene, individual interpretations change the meaning of written words. In the course of an evening Jean Brodie ranged from an enthusiastic young teacher squatting on the floor to an aristocratic and prim leader of young women.

On Friday, Gressler posted a list of those students who met with his approval at the Wednesday and Thursday auditions.

Brodie: Jan Powell, Kate Jennings, Nancy Julian, Nancy, Jenny, Mary: Jenny Nielson, Chris Boyd.... Perry: Mike Ryan....

On Friday, Gressler auditioned the voices of the call backs. Before the May 13 performance of the play they will have to learn to sing original Scottish ballads and to speak the Scottish brogue.

The play is sponsored by the University Theater.



Photo by Kevin Pope

Auditioning for a part in a play can change students into something other than themselves — they soon become lost in a created character, at least until the scene is over. Then come the tense moments awaiting the director's decision as to who gets the part — and who doesn't.

Oregon Student Lobby

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Student parent/non-student parents/spouses/single parents,
Please fill out the following questionnaire.

The questionnaire is designed to document the need for additional state-funding of day care for student-parents. Results will be used in conjunction with Oregon Student Lobby efforts to secure passage of House Bill 2459, a \$3.65 million student-parent day care bill currently under consideration in Salem.

Please turn in questionnaires by 5 p.m., Thursday, April 7 at the ASUO Executive office, Suite 4, EMU, or at day care letter writing tables located at the Bookstore or EMU.

SEX: Male Female

1. Type of family: One-parent Two-parent
2. No. Children under 2½ yrs. 2½-6 yrs. 6-12 yrs.
3. Gross annual income (all sources): under \$6000 \$6-7000 \$7-8000 \$8-9000 over
4. Currently enrolled in post-secondary study? Yes No
(IF YES) Full-time Part-time 2-yr. degree 4-yr. degree graduate program
5. Were you divorced, separated or widowed just before or after your entry into school? Yes No
6. Are you currently employed? Yes No (IF YES) Full-time Part-time
7. Current child care arrangements: self in home spouse in home sitter in home outside sitter day care facility unattended
8. Currently receiving child care assistance? Yes No
(IF YES) Source: Campus subsidy Employer subsidy 4-C's Self-Financed Education & Training Program CSD Vocational Rehabilitation
9. Are you interested in pursuing further schooling/training at the post-secondary level? Yes No (IF YES) Full-time Part-time 2-yr. degree 4-yr. degree graduate program
10. If eligible, would you take advantage of subsidized child care to pursue further schooling/training? Yes No
11. What type of child care would you prefer? self in home spouse in home sitter in home outside sitter day care facility unattended

If you are interested in actively supporting legislative efforts to provide child care assistance to student-parents please call:

Rachelle Katz, ASUO, Suite 4, EMU, 686-3724. Also you may attend weekly strategy and work meetings at 10:30 each Friday in April in the EMU, room to be posted. Your help is needed.

ERICA JONG

a new novel by
the author of
fear of flying

HOW TO SAVE YOUR OWN LIFE

How to Save Your Own Life picks up Isadora Wing's story 3 years after Fear of Flying. With 2 marriages and a best seller behind her, Isadora is now an older, wiser heroine.

How to Save Your Own Life deals with the gradual stages by which a marriage falls apart—the problems of betrayal, jealousy and trust. But the book is also about fame, Hollywood, and sexual experimentation.

Now Available at the Bookstore

\$8.95

U of O Bookstore 13th at Kincaid
Phone 686-4331
Open: M-F 8:15 am-5 pm, Sat. 9 am-1 pm