

Surface and Symbol

The Emerald's weekly arts and entertainment supplement

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Black '77 stages 'Survival' a satirical view of convicts

By BENJAMIN BOPP
Of the Emerald

"Black '77," a native theatre group from South Africa, will conduct a workshop about performing and present a play depicting prison life in South Africa in the EMU Ballroom Tuesday.

"Black '77" consists of four young black actors, Seth Sibanda, Dan Maredi, Themba Ntinga and David Kekana, who have been brought to America by Professor James Bertolf, chairman of the Theatre Arts Department of Orange Coast College in California.

"Every few years," Bertolf says in a press release, "I take off on a trip in search of theatrical talent in its early stages of development. My object is never to pick up a fully professional show, but to find something still growing, as in this case. Two years ago I was in Ireland and Scotland. This year I thought I'd visit Africa — a part of the world which is just being noticed by Americans."

"The players," he continued, "have what you might describe as a commonality with American Blacks — the sense of humor, the musical ability, the eye for satire."

Survival, the play they will present at 8 p.m. Tuesday night in the Ballroom, is a protest against prison life. It consists of four different visions of prison and the world as seen from prison, corresponding to the characters of the four actor/prisoners. The actors combine song, mime, satire, self-

parody, humor, and irony to portray the "prison-freedom conflict." The play was described as, ostensibly, a "jailbird's eyeview" of life in and out of prison in South Africa but the universality of the theme relates it to the penal system anywhere.

An uncredited review in Johannesburg's Rand Daily Mail states, "*Survival* illustrates the incredible development of the African actor. There has always been talent here, but until recently it was raw talent; the norm was exaggeration and overplaying."

"This current production...reveals a new discipline, a new-found sense of timing, an appreciation that silence sometimes speaks louder than words. Between the four men exists an astonishing ensemble rapport."

"*Survival* is a series of incidents in the lives of cell-mates, with flashbacks to explain the reason for their arrests. Intermingled with the drama and tragedy are humor and song."

"Most of the credit, I imagine, must go to (director) Mshengu, who masterminded the whole production, skillfully guiding its concept and realization. He has succeeded in regimenting natural African vigour into a strict Western format."

Sydney Duval, in his review of *Survival* for another Johannesburg newspaper, says, "The greatness of this work lies in both its structure and its demonstration that humor can be a powerful way of making political points. For though you want to weep, you also want to laugh — and laugh



Photo courtesy of South African Black Theatre Project

like hell. Which is a very human way of responding to a tragic situation. Anyone who professes a love for theatre should see what's happening (here). This is where it's at. It's strong and ugly but beautifully inspiring stuff."

The workshop will be held in the Ballroom at 1 p.m. Tuesday, it's free. Tickets for the evening performance of *Survival* are \$3 for University students and \$4.50 for non-students. They are available at the EMU Main Desk.

Art festival offers documentaries, Shaker service

The University Festival of Arts continues today through Sunday with its series of documentary films and a Shaker worship service.

By BOB WEBB
Of the Emerald

In recognition of the new film studies program offered in the Speech Department, the Festival, which began yesterday, is sponsoring afternoon seminars and evening film lectures by filmmakers from the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada.

At 3:30 this afternoon in Room 107, Lawrence, the films "The Documentary Film — Function," "Goldwood," "No Bid Money" and "Pas De Deux" will be presented.

At 8 p.m. tonight, John Taylor will lecture in Room 150, Geology, on "Film as a Method for Interpreting Regional Subjects to a National Audience." The film "He's Not the Walking Kind" will be shown.

Taylor is Executive Producer of the British Columbia Regional Production Center of the NFB, located in Vancouver, B.C. He

joined the NFB in 1966, and since that time has served as producer and/or director of a number of films, including several animations, such as "TV Sale," a satire on television.

At 3:30 p.m. tomorrow, the films to be shown in Room 107, Lawrence, include "The Documentary Film — Purpose," "Augusta," "Atlanticanada Clips" and "Working Class on Film."

Kathleen Shannon will lecture on "Film as an Alternative to the Images of the Mass Media: Our

Unknown and Unnoticed Histories" at 8 p.m. tomorrow night evening in Room 150, Geology. The film "Great Grandmother," a history of the settlement of the west from the point of view of the women who experienced it, will be shown.

Shannon is the Executive Producer of Studio D, a unit of the National Film Board devoted to the production of films and subjects not ordinarily "well served by the mass media." She has been a member of the NFB since 1956, where she has served as

music/producer with the Challenge for Change program. Her film credits include work on "Circle of the Sun," "Lonely Boy," "The Summer We Moved to Elm Street" and "My Name is Susan."

A "congregation" of sixteen vocalists from Fullerton College in Southern California will perform a facsimile Shaker worship service on Saturday and Sunday. Salli Terri, director, has worked to obtain an authentic look as well as sound to her production through extensive research into Shaker life, music, dance and religion.

The group performs in costume with a set which is suggestive of a Shaker meeting house.

The name Shakers identifies a small Utopian community who arrived in the U.S. from Liverpool in 1774, led by Mother Ann Lee. Eighteen "families" (United Societies) eventually formed under her guiding light. Their motto, "Put your hands to work and your hearts to God," led to vows of celibacy, and the intent to remove all evil from their lives. During trances they often received spirit messages and "gifts" of song, spoke in "tongues," and rhythmically trembled and shook, pacing the floor to release evil from their bodies. The name Shaking Quakers, used by outsiders to deride their religious practices, was later adapted by the group itself.

The performances of the Shaker service will be at 8 p.m. Saturday in the EMU Ballroom, and on Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Community Center for the Performing Arts, 8th and Lincoln.

There is no charge for any of the activities during the Festival of Arts.

First Poetic Hoo-Hah, Spring Trip to be aired

The 1st perennial Poetic Hoo-Hah and Spring Trip lives again! Only this time it's all on tape.

Eugene television station KVAL is showing a video tape, which was made at last year's Hoo-Hah by reporters Bill Bradbury and Steve Christensen, tomorrow evening at 8 p.m. on Channel 13, Cable 8. The one hour presentation was put together by Bradbury and Christensen from over 7 and one-half hours of tape shot during both the afternoon and evening sessions of the event which was held last June 6 at Mac Court.

Friday's showing is an attempt to distill into one hour an entire day and evening of poetry, music,

theatre, magic and general happenings that made up last year's Hoo-Hah. It will try to capture some of the flavor of the day by showing a few of the many participants in the event. Included is footage of name people like novelist William Burroughs, poets Anne Waldman and Bob Michelin, and jazz musician Charles Lloyd, as well as local talent such as the NewMime Circus, the Flying Karamazov Brothers and Pleasant Hill author Ken Kesey, who actually fits into both categories.

A reminder: the 2nd perennial Poetic Hoo-Hah and Spring Trip is coming up on Saturday, May 7 at the same place (Mac Court). Watch the Emerald for further information on this major cultural event.