

Under Milk Wood

An 'act of love' invites quick involvement

There's something quite wonderful happening in downtown Eugene over the next few weekends, and all play-goers are hereby advised: the Oregon Repertory Theater's (ORT) revived production of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* is a joyous theatrical experience, a buoyant river of image and word that makes the daily experiences of a Welsh fishing village something truly poetic. The program notes say this production has been an "act of love" and I agree: I loved it.

This treatment makes a very interesting innovation in the original work. Though originally intended

for radio with anonymous narration, this theater version has fleshed the narrator out in the person of Thomas himself, the spirited, drunken Welsh poet played majestically by Al Strobel. The materialization of the author has a deep effect on the work; its focus is broadened on two distinct

between the audience and the stage to be over-stepped; involvement is irresistible.

There is no central story connecting the vignettes of the village characters, except perhaps for Thomas' attempts to create them. Villagers spirit across the stage in rapid flashes, each figure

Ritchie, Jane VanBoskirk, John Freeman, Randi Douglas and Philip Morris.

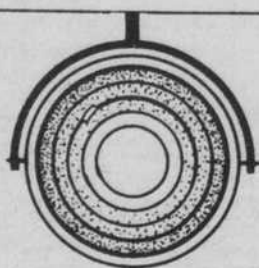
Under Milk Wood's staging is a fine achievement. Randi Douglas has directed a flow of busy stage traffic that is fluid and often mesmerizing. Appearances and disappearances occur with great speed, but they're not confusing. Rather, the effect is sensual, with the montage of physical movement and spoken poetry creating a very definite overall impression. The players are rarely off-stage, and their constant presences and poses seem to form a collage, a continual interplay of individual portraits against each other. Douglas has developed a responsive interpretation of poetry in theater. She's found a mode that helps bridge the gap between the intentions of language and stage imagery. The play has been made to dramatize both the subject of the poetry and, to an extent, the qualities of a poetic vision as

Thomas would be seeing it.

ORT's present stage, with seating capacity of 180, is a good theater space for *Under Milk Wood*. The play gains from the intimacy of the place, and the small dimensions help the audience concentrate on the rapidly-delivered poetry. This play does demand concentration.

The set by Andrew Traister is dominated by a main platform made from aged wood that had a definite seaside scent to it. The production has many richly physical aspects to it, from its seasoned set to the earthiness of many of the characters.

This play is by no means a purely cerebral evening; the villagers are graphically concerned with their physical selves. *Under Milk Wood* is a work stimulating in the sensual and intellectual way that poetry is best able to provide. The flow of the language and staging help us to feel the poetry of the village's life, and the words lead us to understand it.



By KEN GOLDMAN

Ghost

(Continued from Page 5B)
one captain. "We will not let it happen."

The story is fairly intriguing, but would be nothing without Fuller's involvement.

He became infatuated with the tales after talking with flight crews during a promotional tour for his book *We Almost Lost Detroit*, puzzled by the consistency of the stories and the reliability of the witnesses. These people weren't self-proclaimed psychics, but hard-boiled mechanics, executives, and crew members.

Fuller did not have an easy time with his investigations. Log books kept disappearing, and EA officials refused to release material or give credence to the stories. Witnesses, too, were tight-lipped, and for a good reason — they immediately got sent to the airline psychiatrist.

But Fuller slogged through all of the red tape and rumors, to finally stand on the brink of conclusion. Could he accept this proof of life after death without a first-hand experience?

This is where the book falters. Fuller prepares the reader for a dramatic climax which he doesn't deliver. If one is already prepared to accept the validity of the ghost stories — and in all probability, most readers are — Fuller's final proof is extraneous.

As for the Big Question — What does it all mean? — Fuller at least asks it. And if the question's context is limited to the possibilities of life after death, he even attempts to answer.

If, however, you are interested in the ramifications of soul survival, you won't find too much probing here. The book is personal, and as such doesn't travel beyond the issues which concern Fuller.

Fuller likes to deal with events in peoples' lives which completely disorient them from their familiar world views. His books *The Interrupted Journey*, *Incident at Exeter*, and *The Day of Saint Anthony's Fire* all concern dramatic alterations of reality.

For the first time, Fuller puts his own reality on the line, and his experiences, while not as spectacular to the reader as they were to him, make for an enjoyable book.

levels. Not only do we have the re-created life of the village with its extraordinarily colorful characters, but we also see these characters as the gift and torment of Thomas' mind as he struggles to create them. The play becomes evocation and essay: a memory of village life and a depiction of creative ferment. The evocation is clearly the dominant element in the production, but the sidelight on Thomas adds a valuable dimension.

The play begins informally, almost imperceptibly. It comes upon the audience very seductively. Thomas slips on-stage even before the pre-show Welsh folksinging is finished. He joins in on a song or two, and suddenly the music isn't "pre-show" anymore. The play has begun, and Thomas has already disarmingly thrust himself into our reality. The absence of traditional opening cues allows the illusionistic wall bet-

a story in himself, each contributing a small patchwork to the entire fabric of the town. *Under Milk Wood* is no story, and all stories. The impression the play leaves one with may be like a poem. All the elements, though whole in themselves, can add to a greater whole, a fuller instance of life and feeling.

It's a very demanding show for the performers. Not only does each actor have to learn a number of roles, but he or she must be able to switch among them in a moment. The company's skill in being so adaptable is one of the high points of the production. Each player mastered a full range of expression that was very believable and human. There is such a multiplicity of characterization that it's a doomed task to try and cite any individually, but it would be fitting to commend the players as a grand whole because they all worked so well together: Al Strobel, Jane Stevens-Jones, Bill



Get the jump on
★ FREEDOM FARES ★
over Spring Break

HURRY!

Eugene Travel

831 E. 13th

687-2823

TOMORROW

EMU
Food
Service

**BEER
GARDEN**
4-7 p.m.

12 oz. glass 35¢
pitcher \$1.50/hotdogs 25¢
free popcorn

Free Entertainment By
WISDOM STAR

PSYCHIC

Advises on business,
love & personal direction.

Jamil
P.O. Box 10154
Eugene, Oregon 97401
Phone anytime:
342-2210 484-2441

Our #1 Seller

SAVE 50%

Reg. \$19.00
NOW \$9.50

Levi's
Movin' On™
Jeans
Lookin' Real Good

Levi's took the lean European fit you want and added the kind of details that make a pair of jeans special. Like simple inset pockets in front, and fancy stitched-pleat details in back. And elastic insets at the waist. Size 28 to 38 in pre-washed denim.

The Jeanery

77 W. Broadway (Downtown Mall)
766 E. 13th (Campus)

Hours: 9:30 - 5:30 Mon.-Sat.
We welcome Visa and Master Charge

the JEANERY