

# NewMime's production 'circus for senses'

Eugene Ionesco's *Macbett* strips the grandeur, the pomp, the noble eloquence, the acid agony from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Even so, enough good is still interred in the bones of Ionesco's play, that Shakespeare's spirit lives on.

Both playwrights record the grotesque excesses of human greed and ambition. But only Ionesco dwells so gleefully upon the grim humor and insidious whimsy of individual behavior. As he once wrote, "Man is a social animal who can't stand society."

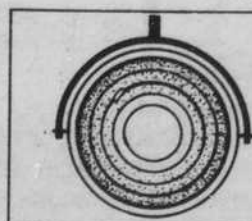
The current NewMime Circus production of *Macbett* at the Community Center for the Performing Arts animates Ionesco's

themes with cunning insight. No heroic/tragic figures populate the play; only blood-lusting jackanapes. No great cathartic action occurs to milk dry the emotions. Only petty, self-serving intrigue motivates the characters. But the NMC cast communicates such an intense empathy for Ionesco's ideas that a warm and invigorating magic works itself upon the audience.

The set becomes a circus for the senses: a bone-white mobile of dismembered legs and arms dangles from the ceiling; a guillotine lops off heads; a soldier does battle while riding a unicycle; a butterfly hunter struts Woody

Woodpecker-like across the floor; various characters burst into mock-operatic song; audience members are enticed into performing; color slides of an A-bombed Hiroshima flash on the wall to the sounds of medieval combat. And all the while, the action is paced by the throaty refrains of a saxophone, the soft staccato of congo drums, the harmonica's muffled whine, the low jingle of bells.

The shabby souls who cavort throughout *Macbett* are bizarre incarnations of Shakespeare's original characters. Each one is a mad mosaic of comically macabre, self-destructive qual-



By **BRUCE CAMPBELL**

## Macbett

ities. The main characters are obsessed with power, but none can master the madness that such power brings.

In Ionesco's hands, Duncan becomes a sniveling snake-in-the-grass; Lady Duncan (who doubles as Lady Macbett) resembles a sleazy siren skulking around in see-through leotards; Banco (Banquo in *Macbeth*) transforms into a schizophrenic shadow of Macbett; and Macbett, in his own words, struggles upon the "slippery slope of temptation" while being Lady Duncan's unwitting toady.

When Macol (the foppish son of a "gazelle") vanquishes the deranged Macbett, things only get worse. Macol proudly promises that his tyranny shall set new standards for cruelty.

Lady Duncan's comment that "The whole world is ass-backward" magnifies the thematic pattern of *Macbett*. In his sly parody of political power, Ionesco

expresses an abhorrence for all government and all rulers. "It is not one's social condition that is inadmissible," he says, "it is the condition of our existence."

The gifted NMC ensemble, who performed before Ionesco when he visited Eugene a few weeks ago, should reap unbounded praise for its production of *Macbett*. James Aday (Macbett), Judith Barker (Lady Duncan-Macbett), Bill Lynch (Duncan) and Richard Cave (Banco) give compelling performances. And the original music (composed and arranged by Ray Leslee, Tom Sassano and Jeff Kirsh) adds a dream-like dimension to the play.

*Macbett* continues this and next Friday through Sunday. Admission is \$3.50, \$3 for students and senior citizens. Tickets can be purchased at the door or reserved in advance by calling 485-6344 or 687-2746. Get thee to the Community Center for the Performing Arts.

## 'Don Giovanni' opens Friday

Wolfgang Mozart's opera "Don Giovanni" will be performed by Eugene Opera this and next weekend.

Set in 17th century Spain, the opera depicts the life of legendary romancer Don Juan. It was the second collaboration of Mozart and librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, official poet to the imperial theaters of Austria. The two combined to give the production both comedy and genuine tragedy.

Playing the character Don Giovanni will be Neil Wilson, a professor of music at the University, and a veteran of performances

with the Boise Civic Opera, the Seattle Symphony, the Oregon Symphony and the Spokane Symphony.

Susan St. John plays Donna Anna, one of Giovanni's seducees.

Giovanni's valet Leporello is played by Elwy Jones, and appeared most recently in Eugene Opera's *H.M.S. Pinafore*.

Patricia Eysenback, currently a voice student at the University, plays the bitter wife Donna Elvira.

Also appearing are Virginia Hurwitz as the peasant Zerlina; Larry Evans as the peasant

Masetto; Guy Aydelott as Don Ottavio; and Kevin Boling as the Commendatore.

Don Giovanni, to be performed in English, will open Friday at 7:30 p.m. at Churchill High School. Other performances are 3 p.m. Sunday April 2 and 7:30 p.m. April 7-8.

Tickets are \$6 general admission, \$8 reserved, and \$3 for students and senior citizens through a purchase by the City of Eugene, Transient Room Tax Fund. For further information, contact the Opera Office, 1192 High Street, 485-2985.

## Taj brings blues back to Ballroom

Taj Mahal will be appearing in the EMU Ballroom next Thursday at 8 p.m.

Mahal, artist of almost a dozen albums, is known for his renditions of traditional Black American music. His versions of songs like "Divin' Duck Blues," "Stealin'," "Statesboro Blues," and "Corinna" have become classics.

Recently, he has dipped in Caribbean and West African music, giving his music flavors of calypso and reggae.

The diversity of his music is reflected in his background. Mahal

was born in a Jamaican community of New York City, his father of West Indian heritage and his mother from South Carolina. The family later moved to New England, and Mahal earned a degree in Animal Husbandry from the University of Massachusetts.

Mahal eventually taught himself guitar, piano, bass, harmonica, vibes, mandolin and dulcimer, and developed a voice for interpreting the blues of the deep South.

He moved to California in 1965, where he and Ry Cooder formed a group called the Rising Sons. In

the same year, he signed with Columbia Records.

Currently with Warner Brothers, he produced the sound track for the film *Brothers*, and a new album called *Musica Fuh Ya' (Musica Para Tu)*. The album includes the songs "The Four Mills Brothers" and "Freight Train."

Tickets for the concert are \$4.50 for University students and \$6 for the general public, and are available at the EMU Main Desk, the Sun Shop, and Everybody's Records.

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 8:30 P.M.

General Admission \$1.50. This special price made available through a purchase by the Parks & Recreation Dept. with Room Tax Funds in the interest of cultural enrichment for the community.

Tickets Available: Symphony Office (see below); U of O—Erb Memorial; Downtown Mall—The Bon. Wilson Music House (806 Charnelton); Southtowne—Van Duyn's (2807 Oak); and Valley River Center at Customer Service Depts. of Meier & Frank, Montgomery Ward and J.C. Penney.

Reserved Seats \$5.00 (1st Balcony) available at Symphony Office only (see below).

For Information or Reservations:

Eugene Symphony Office  
1245 Charnelton #1, 97401—687-0020

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