

Theater



Photo by Don Aday

Jane Van Boskirk of ORT and Bill Lynch of the NewMime Circus team up to bring sex, violence and even comedy to the Open Gallery stage in "The Seahorse."

Seahorse
By Edward Moore
Open Gallery
Directed by Allan Gross
Oct. 6-8

A merchant sailor returns from a voyage set on two dreams. One is to buy an old commercial fishing boat and rehabilitate it into a party boat. The other is to marry Gertrude, the fat and self-deprecating owner of a sailors' bar.

Such is the premise of the play, *The Seahorse*, which will be staged at the Open Gallery, 445 High Street this weekend. Curtain is at 8:30 p.m..

Jane Van Boskirk plays the bar owner, a woman whose apparent strength masks a trauma-ridden past. Bill Lynch portrays Harry, the sailor, a small man who initially appears much the weaker of the pair.

That's the promising aspect of this play — in the first act it seems life roles have been reversed. The woman is independent, self-supporting and wary of romantic entanglements. The man is a near-failure and a big talker. Unfortunately, after a few too many O'Neillish soliloquies, things work out in the second act in formula fashion.

However, what the play lacks in surprise appeal, it makes up in true-to-life revelations about a relationship between two people. Both Harry and Gertrude have obvious weaknesses, they put up defenses and they intentionally hurt each other. But the realism and simplicity of the dialogue is, overall, quite believable.

For a two-character play, there's a lot of action — violent verbal battles, an actual wrestling brawl, strenuous seductions, a bawdy song and dance. The play is finely paced and contains some genuinely moving moments.

Director Allan Gross has coaxed a good, animated performance out of Lynch. Although Boskirk gets off to a slow start — her early dialogue was stilted — she recovers to more than match Lynch. Hers is the more complex part, requiring her to be comedic, angry, childish, hysterical and loving, sometimes with only a short pause between successive mood changes.

Though both actors give good overall performances, their lines too often don't mesh. Of course Boskirk's character is supposed to be afraid of revealing her past and her true emotions and must pretend to ignore the prying of the determined sailor, faking hardness.

But that doesn't mean the words of one character should pass through the other character, as happens all too often here. The sailor's lines would have an impact on Gertrude then bounce off and we should sense that underneath they do elicit a response — the ending surely indicates they've had an effect.

Likewise, Harry should respond as if he does indeed hear Gertrude — a stubborn man is not necessarily a deaf man. I suspect the director, Allan Gross, has failed to encourage the proper coordination between his actors.

In spite of the drawback that soliloquies directed at unborn children and dead fathers have the same effect as the speeches one character makes to another, *The Seahorse* is entertaining, a good evening of dramatic theater. Arrive early, as seating is limited. By William Kogut.

Seascape
By Edward Albee
University Theatre
Directed by Faber DeChaine
Oct. 6-7

Seascape is an odd, subtle little play about a chance meeting at the seashore of two middle-aged couples, one of which is a pair of bright-green English-speaking amphibians. Improbable as this plot may sound, it is in the skilled hands of Edward Albee and, through the smooth respectful performance of the University Theatre, very effective drama.

In the first act we meet Charlie and Nancy, vacationers at an unspecified beach. We learn they have had an average quiet life, but that they are in conflict over the future. Charlie wants to do nothing. Nancy wants to do anything rather than resignedly await death. It is obviously a familiar quarrel that would go on indefinitely... if not for the arrival of two formidable reptiles.

The other couple is Leslie and Sarah. They are neither hostile nor completely friendly; rather, they are curious, polite and reserved. Also, it turns out, they are much like Charlie and Nancy. Both couples feel uncomfortable with their lives. Neither knows what to do next. When they realize that in spite of their differences they are profoundly alike, they realize, too, that they are fated to go into the future together.

Obviously this is not an easy play to perform. A fine balance must be achieved in order to convey the couples' basic similarity. That this balance is maintained throughout the play, that the audience can accept two wildly incongruous couples as kindred souls, is a tribute to the acting, which is uniformly excellent.

Bonnie Vorenberg, who plays Sarah, is exceptionally good. The play's success really depends on her: for it is her ability to convincingly show human emotion while dressed as an outlandish sea-monster that brings the play to its climax. It seems entirely natural at the conclusion that the four characters walk off hand-in-hand, linked together in spite of their difference; and this union is made convincing by Vorenberg in a single, slightly chilling scene.

The only serious criticism one could make about the performance is that it is played too much for laughs. *Seascape* contains a good deal of humor, but it arises naturally; it need be neither forced nor emphasized. It is, after all, a deadly serious play, and its effect is reduced when too many laughs are sought.

This is a fairly minor point, however. The performance is agreeable in almost every way: set, costuming, direction and acting. The University Theatre has done a good job with a demanding play, and its two remaining performances are highly recommended. By Eric Nieman.



PIRATES of PENZANCE

A Comic Opera by Gilbert and Sullivan

October 12, 13, 14, 20, 21 8 p.m.
October 22 2 p.m.

Reservations can be made at the Eugene Opera! office, 1192 High Street, or call 485-2985.

Sheldon High School
2455 Willakenzie Road

\$7 Reserved Seats
\$5 General Admission
\$3 Students & Senior Citizens

Eugene Opera!

Reduced rates are possible by purchase of City Room Tax funds administered by the Parks and Recreation Dept.

Hold Me!
By Jules Feiffer
Oregon Repertory Theatre
Directed by Judd Parkin
Oct. 5-8, 12-15, 19-22

Even Superman is insecure in *Hold Me!*, the revue based on Jules Feiffer's cartoons and skits now on stage at the Oregon Repertory Theatre.

Superman insecure? It's all due to this typical New Yorker, who points out to the caped Crusader that it's very strange, him running around in a skin-tight suit, saving mostly men, not being married...

"Men get into most of the trouble!" protests Superman. "And I'm too busy fighting crime to get married!"

"Come on, admit it. Aren't you a trans-sexual?" the New Yorker demands. (Yes, New Yorker, not Metropolitans. I could tell by the accent.)

Hold Me! is most definitely about super-critical, neurotic and of course insecure New Yorkers. Wait, I've been redundant — let's just say it's about New Yorkers.

Conventional wisdom has it that cartoons deal in hyperbole, but Feiffer really doesn't exaggerate too much. New Yorkers are actually like that!

Which is not to say this play is irrelevant to non-New Yorkers. New Yorkers live in an intense environment. They're overly sensitive because they're always running at fever pitch. They're not abnormal. Think of them as amplified versions of non-New Yorkers.

A neurotic little voice inside of me is saying, "Hey, Mr. Wise Guy Reviewer, stop all the yatchettering already. The play, how is it?"

Terrific. Gini Blake's Yiddish

and Brooklyn accents slip occasionally, but she more than made up for those lapses with an ad libbed remark during a plea to God — she knew He had other problems besides hers to think about, what with Him, "losing all those Popes lately."

Bill Geisslinger, as a Woody Allen-type character who is "hooked on nice," is outstanding. He is particularly exciting as a man whose impotence is cured after his bedmate informs him that sex is indeed dirty.

John Freeman is wonderfully macho as a tough, okay as Superman.

Bill Ritchie, as Larry Charm, carried on energetically in some of the better bits. I cringed when he announced to his 5-year old son. "You're not working out. You had promise, but you're just not working out," slipped him a \$10,000 check and advised him to go to Miami. I laughed nervously at Larry's farewell advice, "And remember, avoid commitments!"

Carolanne Young is Feiffer's Dancer, the true *artiste*. Of all the players, hers is the only face whose contorted expressions come close to evoking the anguished lines of a Feiffer drawing. But she is funny, very funny.

"Excuse me again, Mr. Wise Guy Reviewer Man, but the play, you haven't said..."

Yes, it is funny. It is better than funny — hilarious, satirical, pointed. A romp, a stinging joy. Okay?

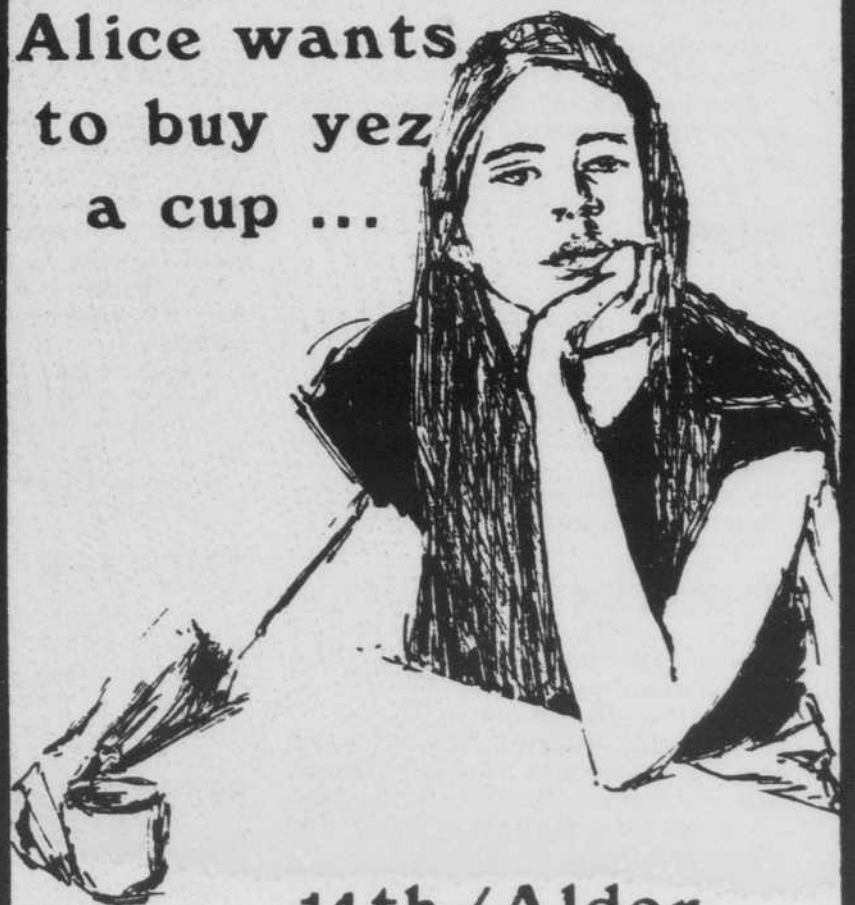
"Fine, except maybe for the stinging joy. But Mr. Wise Guy Reviewer Man, you never told the people you were born in Brooklyn, lived in..."

Let's not get into that. By William Kogut

THE HOMEFRIED TRUCKSTOP

AT THE HOMEFRIED TRUCKSTOP YOU CAN HAVE A DELICIOUS BREAKFAST, LUNCH, OR DINNER WHILE ENJOYING THE TALENTS OF EUGENE'S FINEST MUSICIANS. AND... WITH THIS AD YOU CAN GET A FREE CUP OF THE BEST COFFEE IN TOWN. (ONE PER PERSON PLEASE)

Alice wants
to buy yez
a cup ...



14th / Alder

HARBOR Seafoods

Does your love life have a big crimp?
Does your shape resemble a blimp?
You can lose weight
and enjoy what you ate
Come to Harbor for fish, crab and shrimp.

(Harbor Seafoods of course!)

WE ACCEPT FOOD STAMPS

10AM-7PM Mon. thru Sat. 24th & Hilgard
CLOSED SUNDAYS Eugene



And to think
that we met
through an ad
in the
Emerald Personals...