

# Thursday Review

emerald arts and entertainment

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## A Big Night on the town. . .

Stepping into DeFrisco's,  
the Oregon Repertory Theatre  
and Lenny's Nosh Bar

**A** *Big Night on the Town* in Eugene seemed almost an absurd concept to a couple of folks from big cities back east:

Maybe even a joke. But this is how it was. Mickey was born, raised and cultured in the wild and windy city of Chicago, while I was busy learning all about life in our nation's capital. Both of them, big, dirty, smelly cities, full of filth and pollution and crime, and on and on.

And culture. Plays, movies, topless discos (that's where you went when you were 17, male, and all you had for I.D. was an ultra-fake pseudo draft card with a name like Brian McAdams stamped crookedly below your Woolworth's photo booth mug-shot), and all kinds of rock concerts.

There was too much to do back there, back then.

But we were so much younger then; we're older — and more (gasp!) conservative? — than that now. Now we live in Eugene.

Our tastes — our demands from a cultured society — have gradually changed over the years. These days Mickey and I are happy to merely get jollied at Taylor's on a Friday afternoon, and maybe catch a blurry movie in 180 PLC. We spend a lot more time in the out-of-doors, skiing, climbing, drinking wine on top of Spencer's Butte.

That's what living in Oregon is all about.

Which is why, to us, the concept of "Night Out on the Town" in Eugene seemed so preposterous.

Our scheduled evening of affairs was not to begin until 9 p.m., so we spent the first part of Friday evening sloshing down beers at the newly-reopened Taylor's. Then we drifted over to 180 PLC to catch *Tommy*, but could only watch it for about 45 minutes before we felt uninspired enough to leave.

So much for our big plans for a normal Friday night. Now it was time for the Emerald's.

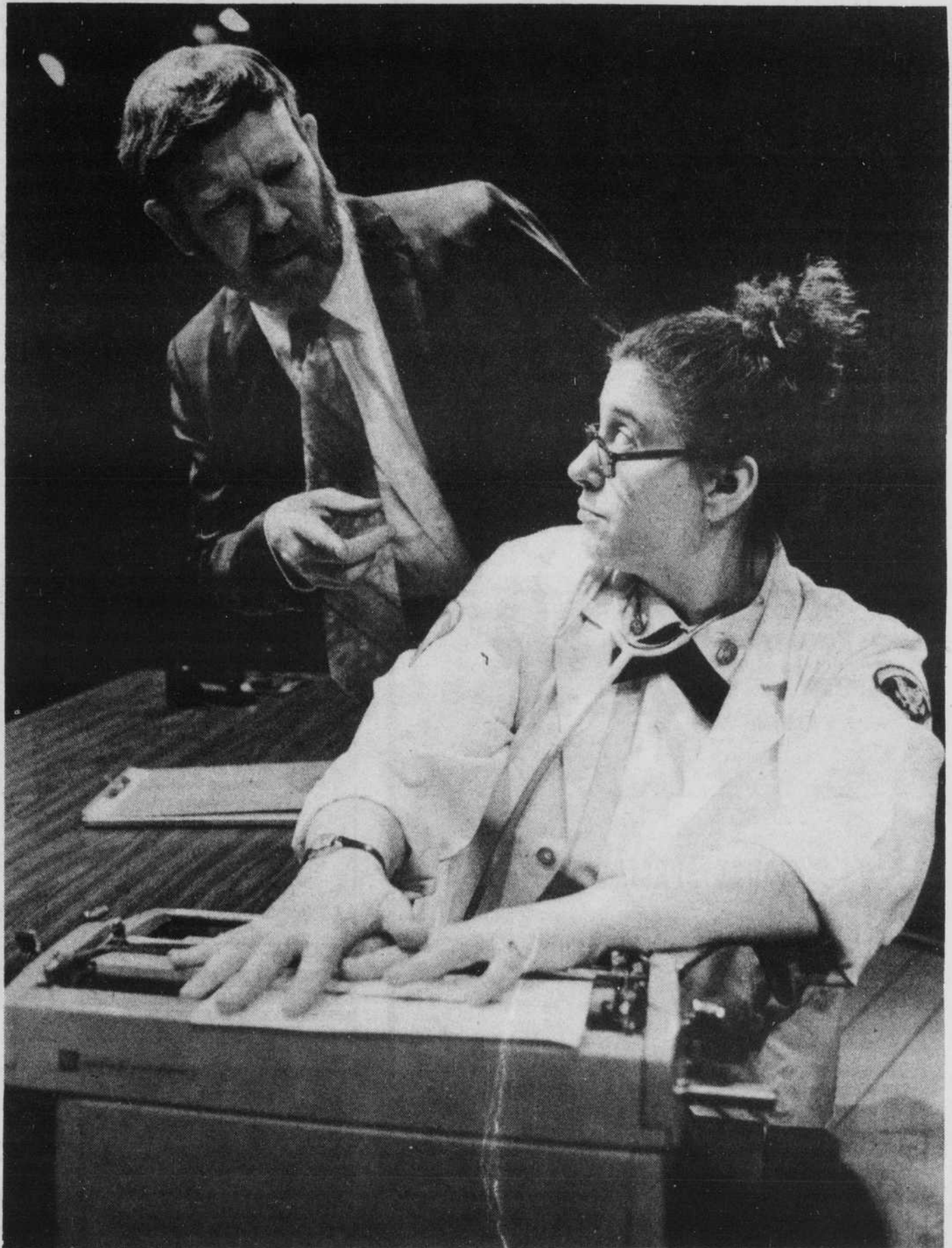
A "big night" in this case also means *long* night. The centerpiece of the evening would be the *Midnight Mafia* play at the Oregon Repertory Theatre. Not to begin, accordingly, until midnight.

So what can people do while waiting to see an ORT play? Why, stop in at DeFrisco's, of course. After all, it's just downstairs.

We wanted to grab a bite to eat, so we were fortunate to walk into DeFrisco's a few minutes before nine, just before the kitchen would close. We ordered a Tuna sandwich, which we would share and a pitcher of Bass Ale.

Now, walking into DeFrisco's is sort of like walking into a cross between a library and an old English Pub. Row upon row of books — real books, mind you, not just a facade — line the walls of one end of the place. And the tables and couches further add to the library effect. In fact, if you weren't drinking beer you might very well imagine yourself *really* in a library somewhere. A nice illusion, lending a sophisticated air to what amounts to, in reality, the systematic destruction of irreplaceable brain cells. The books on the shelves at DeFrisco's are real, but most of them were probably fetched from a "price per pound" garage sale. You probably wouldn't want to bother reading any of them. But they do look nice, especially from a distance.

Bass Ale is only one of the many imported beers flowing from taps and bottles here. They do have good ol' domestic beer, but, to steal a quote from an earlier piece, "that would be like ordering a mountain-goat hamburger at a seafood restaurant. . . well, you know



The *Midnight Mafia* Production of *NEXT* plays March 6, 7, 13 and 14 at 9 p.m. Tickets for all performances are \$2.50. Call the ORT box office at 485-1946 for reservations.

how it goes. It is a lot cheaper to drink American beer (keep American dollars in America), but since we had a rich uncle footing the bill, not to mention a cultured appreciation for the superior beers of Europe, we were able to hold the Americans at bay the whole night long.

The waitress brought the sandwich — not much to be said for it, except that it definitely wasn't worth the \$2.95 price tag that came with it. Not that we expected anything special from a pub's "kitchen", but it would have been nice to get something more than this dull fish on white bread. Still, it served the useful function of absorbing beer, and so we were happy to have it.

DeFrisco's had more European beers than we had capacity to handle them. At \$4.50 a pitcher for draught and \$1.60 a bottle otherwise, our illusory limitless supply of money soon reached its limit. And just in time, for it was ten minutes 'till midnight when the last of our

bottles clanged empty, and we stumbled up the stairs to the ORT.

Now, lest the reader think this writer was "drunk beyond all comprehension," and thus unable to accurately review the ensuing theatre production, let me first admit to a slight "literary exaggeration" in the account of DeFrisco's. We had put a few down, it is entirely true; but with a view towards the play assignment I had moderated my intake so that, by the time the play started, I was reasonably "with it" — at least, no more under the covers than the typical *Midnight Mafia* play-goer. And besides, half the people in the audience had been in DeFrisco's beforehand, so this writer's view was at least "typically slanted."

Continued on Page 2B