

'Inherit' offers unity, harmony

By **MATT MEYER**
Of the Emerald

A certain feeling arises when a large group of objects come together and work in harmony. Basketball players, musicians and mechanics all have felt the feeling at one time or another.

Everyone involved in last Thursday's opening performance of *Inherit The Wind* knows the feeling, too, as all of the players worked together to produce a sensational show.

The strengths of any performance lie in its acting and directing, and the time that director Grant McKernie spent working with his actors is evident. The product is a well-designed machine that runs smoothly and effortlessly.

Inherit The Wind is the story of the clash between two lawyers — Matthew Brady (Tom Lasswell) and Henry Drummond (Bob Friedman) — in a legal battle over teaching evolution in public schools.

The battle takes place in Hillsboro, a small town referred to as "the buckle on the Bible belt," and is filled with all the characters you'd expect to see — the overzealous reverend (Jerry Walker), his daughter (Nicki Calcagno), the headstrong schoolteacher (Rob

Sackett) and other colorful small-town characters.

There is more to *Inherit The Wind* than a mere legal battle, however.

The central issue is the right of an individual to think, but another facet of the story is the relationship between the two lawyers.

Rachel, the reverend's daughter, must choose between the traditional thoughts her father represents and the radical ideas her boyfriend, the schoolteacher, is struggling with.

Lasswell and Friedman, the two leads, display the harmony that keys the play's success. Lasswell rages in righteous fury against "evil-lootion" while Friedman pokes fun at the bias of the town and the unwillingness of the townspeople to examine the ideas of "this Charlie Darwin fella."

Although their characters compete with each other, the actors never do. Lasswell and Friedman play off each other in a way that brings out the best of both.

The result is a pleasure to watch. And they aren't the only ones to shine.

Walker, as the Reverend Jeremiah Brown, puts in a phenomenal performance as he rants and raves as only a southern preacher can. His energy and delivery are as intense as an audience can handle.

The icing on the cake is provided by Robert Barton as Baltimore journalist E. K. Hornbeck. Barton's eloquence is surpassed only by his ego as he hog-ties the townspeople with



Photo by Bill Wack

Matthew Brady and Henry Drummond clash over teaching evolution in the schools in the Carnival Theatre's current production.

ropes of words. His cynical barbs are punctuated by perfect timing. On opening night, he managed to bring the house down with every line.

The one weak point in the production is the set. By re-positioning wooden tables and chairs against an ambiguous orange backdrop, scene designer Jerry Williams evidently hoped to create different sets for different locations in the town.

Although it works at times, the

technique isn't convincing during certain indoor scenes, and the resulting confusion detracts from the action.

In every other respect, however, harmony and balance is achieved. Lighting, costuming, timing, and especially the acting all work together to produce a unified show.

Inherit The Wind is a triumph. In it, McKernie has presented a serious, relevant issue with lots of humor to make for an enjoyable evening.

Panel discusses home births

By **DONALD COULTER**
Of the Emerald

Medical-aid options for childbirth are significantly better than they were just a few years ago, panelists at an alternative birth symposium said last Thursday.

The symposium, sponsored by Home Oriented Maternity Experience, dealt with topics on maternity care and delivery for people seeking a home birth. HOME is a national organization that gives support and information to those choosing this method of childbirth.

Among the panelists was Julia Herson, a practicing midwife in Eugene for the last six years. According to Herson,

midwives in this area have kept a low profile until just recently.

"When I had my first child at home in 1972, I didn't know if midwives were even legal," she said. "Home births stayed under the table until 1973 or '74."

At that time midwifery became more organized in Eugene, Herson said. But most midwives were still isolated from each other and did not freely communicate ideas.

Things didn't change until the Oregon attorney general's office legitimized the practice of midwives four years ago, Herson said.

Herson said that lay midwives soon will be certified by the state and because of that, the demand for home births will in-

crease in the future.

Another option for those who want to have their babies outside of a hospital is the "birth home."

Irene Nielson started the Lucinia Birth Home in Cottage Grove in 1973, one of only four in the country at the time. She plans to start one in Eugene in September.

According to Nielson, a birth home provides for the "total childbirth experience." A birth home not only offers a place for the childbirth itself, but it also has a staff which provides information on nutrition and parenting and offers clinic support through the first 16 weeks after the birth.

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