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theater review

'Homeward' looks bad

By Jonathon Siegle
Of the Emerald

Thomas Wolfe may very well have been our finest descriptive writer. His four largely autobiographical novels are luxuriant in their detail, sensuous and sensual, rich and evocative.

Ketti Frings' play, "Look Homeward Angel," currently in production by Carnival Theater, is loosely adapted from Wolfe's first novel. It's not a bad play. Frings does simplify Wolfe's wonderfully complex characters, but under the direction of Faber DeChaine, even those over simplified people are reduced to shallow, two dimensional stick figures.

"Look Homeward Angel" introduces us to Eugene Gant (Wolfe), his mother, Eliza and father, W.O., and his brothers and sister. The play centers on Eugene at 17, the death of his beloved older brother Ben, his affair with an older woman, and his abrupt decision to leave the family's boarding house for college.

Jim Conant, as Eugene, is shackled under DeChaine's direction. He is made to perform with his face buried in his chest, a whipped puppy, whose uprising against domineering Eliza is just not believable. The shame is that Conant obviously is a good actor.

Unfortunately, Phyllis Julian, as Eliza, and Stuart Currie, as W.O., are not. Their portrayals of the central figures in young Eugene's life are amateurish and sloppy.

Currie forms Gant's speeches as if he were a boy in an elocution class. He politely waits for his cue, then delivers an outburst meant to overpower other speakers. He gives the failed sculptor

Gant no more life than the gravestone monuments he's reduced to carving.

Phyllis Julian mangles Eliza. This powerful woman, who so completely dominates the lives of her family, becomes a flat cut-out doll. This woman, whose head contains the intimate details of every person in town, forgets her lines, misquotes the price of a room, and can't remember the name of her own son! She has two gestures, hands on hips, and finger to chin, and only one tone of voice. It's no wonder Eugene can't fight her. She's not there.

The other characters fare much better. Dana Black is quite believable as the hack news writer Ben, calmly committing suicide by cigarette.

Jody McCoy, as Fatty Pert, easily captures the jovial, rotund lady whose presence is the one joy in Ben's life. Their scenes together are the best in the show.

However, the entire production is amateurish. The make-up is really dreadful. The costumes seem to have all come from the same rack. Most of the men even wore the same tan patent leather shoes.

The set was dull and plain, with little stage dressing. The stone cutter's shop, supposedly the fiery Gant's one refuge for 30 years, was as clean and uncluttered as an operating room. When Eliza enters and takes out her hanky to wipe a bench to sit on, there isn't even any dust!

It's a shame a play with such good characters is produced this poorly. No wonder the Friday night audience seeing it did not exceed 30 people.

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Runa Simi will perform authentic Andean music 8 p.m. tonight at the Latin American Cultural Center, 1236 Kincaid.

J U L Y 1 5 - J U L Y 2 1

F I L M

Thursday
"The Seventh Seal" at 7 and 9:00 p.m. in 150 Geology. Adults \$1.50, children \$1.

Friday
"MASH" at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in 150 Geology. Adults \$1.50, children \$1.

Cinema 7
"Three Brothers" at 7:30 and 9:40 p.m. and Sunday matinee at 2.

Saturday Market: Aurora at 11:30 a.m. and Angelsong at 1 p.m.

M U S I C

Eugene Parks and Rec Summer Concerts

Thursday
Spencer Creek Drifters 6:30 p.m., Amazon Park, 27th and Hilyard.

Saturday
Northern Broadcasters Noon-2 p.m., Trude Kaufman Sr. Ctr., 996 Jefferson.

Sunday
Caracas 2-4 p.m., Skinner Butte Park, Chesire at Lincoln
Musician's Union Summer Band 6:30 p.m., University Park, 24th and University

Clubs, etc.

Jo Federigo's: Valinda Aletha and Jeff Kirsch July, 15-17. Dick Blake Trio, July 18-19. Nancy King and Steve Christofferson, July 20-22.

Harry's: Molly Scholz and Don Ross Tues.-Sat., through July 31.

Lone Star Cafe and Bar: Michael John, Kimberly and Special Delivery. Western swing. No cover.

Hacienda Steak House: Shiner. Top 40's

Union Oyster Bar: Apples in Winter. Thurs.-Fri., Irish Pub Music. No cover.

Concerts

Runa Simi will perform authentic Andean music, sponsored by the Eugene Council for Human Rights in Latin America July 15 at 8 p.m. at the Latin American Cultural Center, 1236 Kincaid.

The Mamas and The Papas July 15, 7 and 10:30 p.m., Euphoria Tavern (Portland).

Third World, July 25, 8:30 p.m., Portland Paramount Theater

T H E A T E R

Carnival Theater presents "Look Homeward Angel," "Harvey," and "House of Blue Leaves" in rotation at Robinson Theater through August 12. Information: 686-4191.

LCC Theater presents "Cole" through July 17. Information: 726-2209.

"My Fair Lady," Performers Acquisitions Co., Sheldon High School through July 17. Information: 683-7207.

"Romeo and Juliet" through August 1, ORT Outdoor Theater on The Mall. Information: 485-1946.

Joffrey Ballet, July 21-25, Portland Civic Auditorium. Tickets available at Meier and Frank.

"Josephine, the Mouse Singer," Western Oregon State College, Monmouth, 8:15 p.m., July 21-28. Information: 838-3771.

"The Woods" by David Mamet, ORT, 222 Broadway July 21-August 15. Information: 485-1946.

Pickle Family Circus, Downtown at Broadway and Lincoln, July 17-18, Noon and 8 p.m.

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

Bohemia Mining Days, Cottage Grove July 14-18.

WISTEC, Planetarium shows weekends at 1 and 3 p.m. Information: 484-9027.

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