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Monday August 2
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dinner roll $1.75

Wednesday August 4
Salisbury steak w/mushroom gravy
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Thursday August 5
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(corned beef, swiss cheese and sauerkraut)
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Friday August 6
Deep fried fish or chicken
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Served Daily

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theater review

'Blue Leaves' audience puzzling

By Jonathan Siegle
Of the Emerald

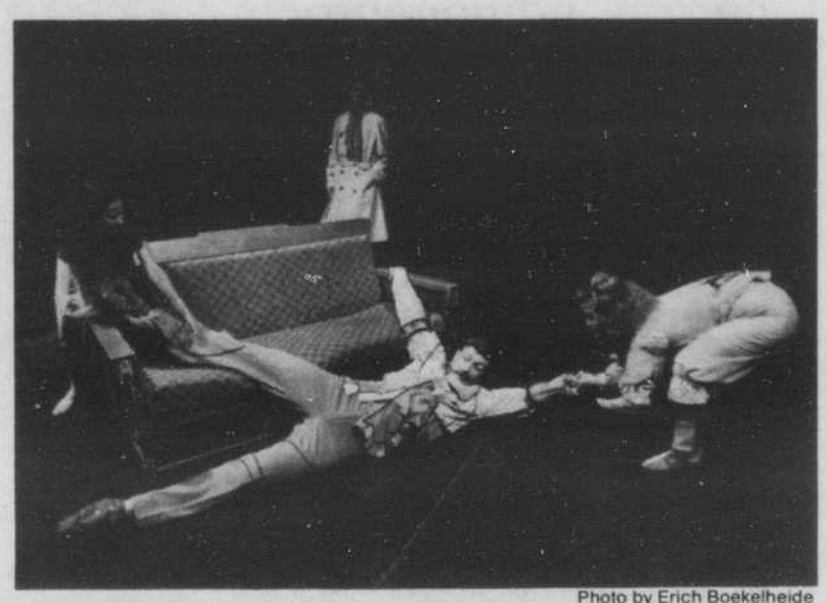

Photo by Erich Boekelheide

"House of Blue Leaves" is a good evening's entertainment despite flaws.

"House of Blue Leaves," the last summer production of Carnival Theater to open, is a harlequin black comedy. The show is quick, rich, and puzzling. Very puzzling.

It is set in the 1960s on "the day the Pope came to New York" in the apartment of Artie Shaughnessy. There are 10 visible and working television sets facing the audience, a car door stage left, and a refrigerator with what must be a beacon inside stage right.

Artie writes songs. He wants to run off with Bunny who he met at a health club. Together they're going to commit his wife Bananas. His son Ronnie is AWOL in New York, to blow up the Pope.

What's puzzling is why director Peter Davis staged it so oddly. Why are there characters walking through all the time? Why are those 10 TV sets flickering on and off? Why are the clothes a debutante's nightmare?

A play has to make sense. Even if it's nonsense — like Ionesco, or Pinter, or Beckett, even Stoppard — there must be a clear vision of what sense there is none of.

John Guare's plot, such as it is, makes some sense. There are some riveting monologues, and enough quirks and bends to hook any viewer. Yet the audience leaves puzzled. If this is Davis' raison d'etre, then he succeeds.

Which is not to say that "House of Blue Leaves" is not a marvelous evening's entertainment. It is. It's that director Davis spoils some of the best damn acting I've seen in a college production in years.

There's an old saying in the theater (Yes dear readers, I'm well past 30, have been involved in theater since I was a boy, and can say these things.) that it's much easier to play crazy people than normal ones. Well, after two plays trying to be more or less normal, the young cast really cuts loose.

Aseneth James as Bananas is so alive, so full, so balanced that her insanity makes complete sense. She loves Artie. Her "madness" is Artie's madness. When James delivers her monologue the audience has no where to go but right inside her soul with her.

As Ronnie, Nicholas Smith manages to stay right up with his exquisite mother. His monologue about the deep trauma inducing experience which warped his young mind should make everyone squirm with remembered shame at his or her own secret guilts.

Charlotte London as Bunny and Barry Pitzer as Billy Einhorn both possess just the right counterbalance for Stephan Yarian's Artie. Bunny is a whacko who cooks instead of screws, and Billy is a Hollywood director who loves his boyhood pal.

But Yarian, who so completely carried "Harvey" on his shoulders, is an enigma. At times he's brilliant, hanging on to the puppet strings of everyone in the cast.

At other times, he doesn't seem to even know what to do with his hands. It is Yarian who suffers most from Davis'inconsistent directing.

See "House of Blue Leaves," but don't go expecting to be passive. At one point Artie tells us "The greatest talent is to be an audience. Anyone can create . . . ." There's your theme. Bring it with you to the show.

Lama to hold workshop on working with dreams

Gyaltrul Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama living in Ashland, will give a two-day workshop in Eugene entitled "Awakening the Dreamer" on Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon and Sunday from 2 p.m.

The workshop, which will introduce participants to Tibetan methods for working consciously and purposefully with the dreamstate, will be conducted at Danceworks, located in Eugene at 1231 Olive Street.

In 1972 Rinpoche was appointed to teach and preserve Vajrayana Buddhism in the West, which he has trained in since the age of eight. He left the East in 1959 when Mao's China initiated occupation of Tibet.

The fee for the workshop is $35. For further information, call 345-0233 or 345-1792.

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