

## Arts and entertainment



Photo by Sheryln Bjorkgren

The cast of "Lucky Per's Journey" polishes its performance at dress rehearsal Tuesday. The play, written by August Strindberg, is being presented at the University's Robinson Theatre Friday and Saturday, and again the following weekend.

### 'Journey' will entertain all ages

"Lucky Per's Journey" will be the highlight at the University's Robinson Theatre this weekend. The play, by August Strindberg, was written in the 1890s and follows the style of expressionism also originated by the playwright.

#### Preview by Kelvin Wee

A play filled with fantasy and excitement, it revolves around the magical adventure of a young boy named Per (pronounced 'pear'). Per is the son of a church-bell ringer and has never been outside of his church-tower home. The adventure begins when Per's fairy godmother is tricked by a troll into giving him a magic ring which will grant his every wish.

Per's journey takes him into different fantasies where he learns the evils of life which his

father has sheltered him from. To guide him through his journey, his fairy godmother sends a beautiful maiden named Lisa. Lisa watches over Per throughout his adventure and is there for him in the end when everyone else deserts him.

Directing this production is Norma Wetzell, a doctoral student majoring in theatre arts. There are two versions to this play, a shorter children's version and the original full-length adult version. "There is really not much difference in both versions except we have excluded much of the politics from the children's version," she said.

"Because we have such a small cast, many of the actors play two or more roles," Wetzell added. "This is very demanding and I feel that they have done a very good job."

The costumes featured in the play are exciting and flow well with the scene changes. Also designed by Wetzell, the costumes distinguish the

various visual images which stage productions often do not allow. Assisting Wetzell with the costumes is Norm Johnson, a recent University graduate who created the masks. The masks add much to the production, and without them much of the essence of fantasy would be lost.

Per is played by Scott Higer, who plans to major in music sometime in the future. Higer is a recent high school graduate from Pocatello, Idaho, and is unsure of his college future. "It is a very difficult role to play mainly because this is my first college production and it has some very long lines which I have to memorize," he said.

Lisa is portrayed by Higer's sister, Kristyn Higer Truan, a graduating University senior in music performance. "The first time she (Wetzell) said that he had to kiss me, I just about passed out," she said. "And being a very inexperienced actress, it is

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### 'Swimming' spins one-man monologue

Spalding Gray is a storyteller. His stories are sometimes horrific, sometimes heart-wrenching, mostly funny and always thought-provoking. "Swimming to Cambodia" conveys all those elements to create a brilliant satire on humanity.

#### Review By Carolyn Lamberson

"Swimming" is actually a film of Gray's one-man monologue, which centers on the eight weeks he spent in Thailand while filming "The Killing Fields." Close observers may recognize Gray from his small role in that film; that of the American ambassador's aide in Cambodia before the American evacuation in 1975.

What is interesting about the performance piece is how Gray relates life, death, love, sex, relationships, paranoid fears and his quest for "the perfect moment" to his time in

Thailand, where "The Killing Fields" was filmed.

However, Thailand is not the only setting for his stories. Gray also parodies life in New York City and the aggressiveness of its inhabitants with great success.

The sets of "Swimming" are not elaborate. Filmed entirely at The Performing Garage in New York City, Gray sits at a desk for the entire film. He occasionally drinks water and points to a map of Southeast Asia. His unique hand motions and facial expressions punctuate certain moods.

The tone and volume of his voice also lend to the monologue's message. One of Gray's talents is his ability to change from his New England/Boston accent to New York, British and South African ones at the drop of a hat.

Director Jonathan Demme ("Harold and Maude," "Stop Making Sense" and "Something Wild") has taken the concept of the concert film

into a newer plane. As with "Stop Making Sense," Demme uses lighting and images projected on to a screen behind Gray to add to Gray's performance and make up for the relative lack of movement in the film.

But even the screen images are used as an enhancement rather than a detractor. The skyscape behind Gray remains constant, however, the lighting changes as the mood of Gray's topic changes.

The inclusion of a musical score by avant-garde performance artist Laurie Anderson is appropriate for this film. The music doesn't distract the audience and isn't constant throughout the film. Instead, it draws the audience into a mood, a feeling, and lets the impact of Gray's monologue grab the audience's emotions.

There is no one message to Gray's monologue. Ranging from the blatantly political to the strictly personal, Gray's

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