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University Housing is an ED/AA institution committed to cultural diversity

## Encore!

# Play unfolds tale of jealous friends

# British 'Benefactors' opens tonight

#### By Layne Lakefish Encore Reporter

Arena Theatre opens the fourth of its five plays this season Wednesday night at 8 with *Benefac*tors, written by Michael Frayn.

Additional performances are scheduled for April 12-14 and 19-21; all performances begin at 8 p.m.

Benefactors, which features the talents of four performers, follows the lives of two couples who are long-time friends.

One of the characters, Colin, sets out to destroy the career of David, an up-and-coming yuppie architect, by destroying one of his projects.

To complicate the plot, Colin's wife, Sheila, decides to go to work for David and ends up falling in love with him.

"This is a story of jealousy and opposition and benefaction." said director Nancy Keating. "The characters have to decide when helping is actually helping and when not helping is helping."

The play also deals with the ideas of co-dependency and giving care and receiving care, said Keating.

"Jane, David's wife, is always helping everyone," Keating said. "She's almost a martyr without knowing it, but in the end she comes to a realization and gets her life back."

The four cast members and many crew members have been practicing for six weeks, and Keating said the play has come a long way.

"When you first read the play it seems very wordy, very English, but the cast and I have had the best time finding more and more and more in the play," explained Keating. "It's a very complex play and it's very clever in the things it ties together."

In Benefactors, actors speak directly to the audience in monologue form 10 years after the events described took place. The actors and actresses present their monologues then go back and perform the events.

"It's very cinematic, it flows very quickly and it's punctuated by the monologues," Keating

Although the plot tells of friends torn apart, it ends on a somewhat good note. "The ending is a little bit up." Keating explained. "All the characters end up a little bit better off and they all come to an understanding.

One of the good things about the play "is that it allows each character to go through changes." she said.

The tangled plot of *Benefactors* promises to entertain audiences. "This is a funny play - Keating is known for his funny stuff - so people will be entertained." Keating explained. "But it will also leave them thinking and maybe seeing some of themselves. They will be amusingly illuminated."



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