

Theater presents double bill

By Jason Jones

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Two plays will be appearing this weekend on a special double bill through the Pocket Playhouse. The authors of the plays are "arguably considered to be America's greatest playwrights," says director Eric Levin.

Hughie by Eugene O'Neill and directed by Eric Levin is a one-act play that takes place in a run-down hotel during the mid-1920s. It is an interaction between two men — one who desperately needs to communicate with someone and another who lives within his own world.

Erie (Kris Cochran) is a lowlife, yet amiable gambler, who has been dependant on a hotel clerk named Hughie throughout his life to give him confidence and to listen to his stories. Hughie died the previous week, and now an introverted man named Charlie (Kelsey Tyler) is the new clerk.

Erie has borrowed \$100 to purchase a flower piece for Hughie, and if he doesn't repay the debt soon, he will be severely beaten or killed. Unfortunately, without Hughie around to give him confidence, he has lost his ability to gamble. He tries to connect with Charlie instead, but Charlie makes almost no response verbally.

As the play develops, Charlie begins to realize that although he is content, there is something that he needs, and maybe this gambler can give it to him. The two men in the lobby are said to be a metaphor for the world, and the message O'Neill conveys is that the only thing we have in life is communication and other people.

"O'Neill has gotten a bad rap as a humorless play-

wright. Actually, there is a lot of humor in his plays. People do and say funny things, and there is a joy about life and living. There may not be much purpose, but there is joy that is reflected. That these two people can make a connection evidences that philosophy," Levin said.

The second play, *27 Wagons Full of Cotton*, is written by Tennessee Williams and directed by Michael Phillips. Three characters interact in this one-act in which lies and deceit are commonplace. Jake (Whalen Elmore) burns down his neighbor's cotton gin so that he can take over the competing business and then convinces his wife Flora (Deanna Sorenson) to lie for him when inquiries are made into the arson.

Vicarro (Eric Teti) is the foreman of the gin that burned down and tries to find out whether Jake was responsible for the fire. When he cannot get any information out of Jake, he waits for the husband to leave and then attempts to get information from Flora by seducing her.

"It is a very dark play — passionate and sexual," Phillips said. "Tennessee Williams said that everything good he had to say about human nature was in *The Glass Menagerie*. All of his other plays have been much darker. Nobody in the play is truly innocent, although Flora is childlike and is taken advantage of."

The two plays will begin Nov. 11-13 at 5 p.m. at the Pocket Playhouse, Room 102 Villard. A \$1 donation will be requested for admission to both shows which are playing together. Seating is general admission.

REVIEWS

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bit more enthusiasm going into their music.

— Ryan Walker
Oregon Daily Emerald



THE QUIET REVOLUTION

★★★½

ARTIST: Ronny Jordan
LABEL: Island

It would be easy for jazz purists to jog in place creatively. Jazz performances are, after all, inherently different almost every time because improvisation is such a key element.

But because jazz is among the most rewarding and important musical genres of the 20th century, its musicians should not be satisfied repeating what's been played before. And fortunately there are innovators. From dixieland to be-bop and from free

jazz to fusion, jazz has always had its share of new directions.

Fortunately, musicians like Ronny Jordan continue to push the boundaries. His new album, *The Quiet Revolution*, continues to take jazz beyond its roots by combining traditional jazz guitar with hip hop. In so doing, Jordan continues where such visionaries as Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock left off — and he creates a great album in the process.

Jazz and hip hop turn out to be a solid mix because the strengths of one always seems to wipe out the weaknesses of the other. Hip hop's main problem is that the rhythms often become monotonous; when a song relies entirely on beats with no melody, there is little to differentiate it from a pounding headache. Jordan, whose guitar playing relies almost entirely on melody, alleviates the problem.

One of the traditional complaints against jazz, conversely, is that it often rambles without a purpose. Improvisational tunes,

particularly free jazz numbers, sometimes don't use steady rhythms at all, instead throwing bits and pieces into a musical collage. Hip hop rhythms, which are solid and repetitive, bring Jordan's playing into focus. He has an arena in which to play, and he does it well.

"Season For Change" has guests Guru, from the rap group Gang Starr, who brings the tune a irreverent, matter-of-fact sensibility. Only midway through the song is there any clue that this is not traditional hip hop fare, as Jordan's smooth jazz playing glides over the top. Jordan also cooks on such numbers as "In Full Swing," "The Jackal" and "Under Your Spell."

Jordan believes fully in hip hop's power to transform jazz. He says so in both music and interviews. With *The Quiet Revolution*, he succeeds in his vision — and hopefully he will continue expanding his ideas in the future.

— Rivers Jansson
Oregon Daily Emerald



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