

Play captures intense emotions

Monica Gill
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The plight of individuals involved in global issues as they struggle against political and media machines is explored in Lee Blessing's *Two Rooms*.

The innocent victims in this play, directed by Rebecca M. Foster, often deal with officials who are guided by logic rather than emotion.

The first scene opens with a young man, Michael (played by Colin Meloy), wearing tattered clothes, a blindfold and handcuffs, and covered with marks of suffering. He has just been taken hostage in Beirut, where he was studying at the American University. Sitting on a shabby mat, he reminisces about his marriage.

The following scene centers on Lainie, his wife (played by Mame Pelletier), who is sitting in what used to be her husband's office in their home in America. She feels his presence there and is comfortable thinking out loud about him.

Walker (played by Josh Nathan) is the reporter who is always at Lainie's home encouraging her to talk to the rest of the world instead of spending all of her time alone in a room. This is juxtaposed with scenes of her husband sitting in his prison cell, creating the sense that both are prisoners.

Walker finally gets Lainie to agree to go on television and tell her story to aid in the release of hostages, and possibly her husband, from Lebanon.

Throughout the play, various

Two Rooms

Arena Theatre
Director: Rebecca M. Foster
Oct. 19-22, 27-29 8 p.m.

emotionally-laden slides accompany the plot. When the scene shifts to Michael, he speaks with so much anger and sincere emotion, you hear the crack in his voice and see his chest and stomach writhing with every breath.

Michael is forced to imagine everything at this point. He has no concept of time and is aggravated because he does not even know the day of the week. He makes the bumps and cracks in the wall into mountains and rivers, and he imagines having a child with his wife. He is moved from place to place in a coffin-style soundproof box, without knowing where or why he is being moved.

When Lainie wasn't delivering her lines, her nervous hands were constantly roaming over her shirt sleeve or pant leg. She would often wrap her arms around herself, indicating her fear. Then, the government official arrived to tell her once again that nothing was happening.

One of the most dramatic monologues comes from a government official, Ellen (played by Maika Jacobi), who tells of all the countries that hate Americans. She states, "They don't kill you because of who you are, but who you might be." They don't think of life as Americans do. They send boys between the ages of 14 and 20 across mine fields so that the

military may cross on clear ground. The boys and the parents of these children are proud that they can do this, not in pain because they or their child are running across a field to be put to death. As slides of some of the boys who ran across the fields are shown, it brings the audience closer to the situation.

Although there was a cast of only four and the entire play was done in one room, nothing could have been added to this play. I found that I had to keep reminding myself that they were acting. The powerful feelings thrown across the stage were intensely realistic.

In some of the closing scenes, Michael sat on his mat squirming around in fear, anger, and loneliness, gouging at his clothes and skin. One could feel the distance between Michael and Lainie even though they shared the same platform.

The actors pull the audience in so that they too, can feel the pain, hope, or lack of hope and anger experienced by the hostage, the wife (also a hostage in her own way), the government official and the reporter. I left feeling appreciative for being able to breathe the cool night air (which Michael had lamented on), a pleasure some may never conceive again.

Two Rooms opens today at 8 p.m. at the University Arena Theatre. It continues Oct. 20-22 and Oct. 27-29. All performances are at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$5 for general public, \$4 for senior citizens, University faculty, staff and non-University students, and \$3 for University students.



The cast of *Two Rooms* includes Maika Jacobi (left, Ellen), Mame Pelletier (bottom, Lainie), Josh Nathan (right, Walker) and Colin Meloy (not pictured, the hostage).

SMITH

Continued from Page 1

Organizations (AFL-CIO) picketed in front of the Valley River Inn to protest Smith's support of Ballot Measures 8 and 12.

Measure 8 would require public employees to pay 6 percent of their salaries toward pension instead of having it financed by the state. Measure 12 would repeal the current law that requires workers on public works projects to be paid not less than the prevailing wage rate.

Pickers chanted, "No on 8. No on 12. No on Smith."

Smith commented on the protest, saying he was the only one of the four candidates who was an AFL-CIO card carrier. He said that examination of labor dollars in his and his opponents budget proposals would clear him of anti-labor charges.

Frank Jackson, a member of the AFL-CIO, said Smith has a bad voting record on worker's rights. Jackson said the fund raiser at Valley River Inn proves Smith's disregard because the hotel is on the AFL-CIO's do-not-patronize list.

NETWORK

Continued from Page 1

nications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"This program will help jump start public sector use of the national information infrastructure," said Laura Breeden, director of NTIA.

The possibilities for information access are innumerable, said J.Q. Johnson, Academic Education Coordinator. For example, the network will allow a high school teacher creating a lesson plan to access related data from the University's or school district's information system at the push of a button, Johnson said.

South Eugene High School is planning on developing a course plan on the Russian language utilizing the University's data banks on the network, he said.

"Today, it's not possible at all to do computer-related information exchange very effectively," Johnson said.

Now, Sacred Heart General Hospital can work directly with the Student Health Center to develop a health care plan for students, Johnson said.

"This network will allow us to better utilize our resources in a very effective, 21st century way," Maureen Shine, deputy director of the Office of Communications, said.

Johnson said plans for the construction of the new system are still in the preliminary stage. But with this grant, the University and these agencies will begin placing the network on-line, he said.

"The short term benefit, which is the biggest benefit, will be the U of O faculty being able to do outreach with the community, especially K-12 grades," Johnson said.

Johnson, along with Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs John Moseley, represented the University in a consortium of representatives from the 15 agencies. The consortium crafted the request for the federal grant last spring. Johnson said he received word of the grant's approval on Oct. 12.

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