



CHAD PATTESON/Emerald

The FOWL Players (left to right), Benjamin Litton, Kris Winter, Marisa Tabizon and David Bayless rehearse their performance of "Drawing the Shades."

## FOWL Players to explore issues of sexual assault

*'Drawing the Shades,' a play about the traumas of rape, will debut tonight at Hamilton*

By Carl Yeh  
Freelance Editor

The FOWL Players are true to their name and acronym: they are Ducks, thespians and are Fighting Oppression With Learning.

Assembled in the spring of 1997, this group of University staff and students are tackling the issue of rape and sexual assault with the presentation of the play "Drawing the Shades." The performance premieres tonight at 8:30 p.m. in the Hamilton Cafeteria. Admission is free and the group welcomes residence hall students.

"I was looking for a way to do something more creative and entertaining, and that's when I had the idea of a theater group," said Stephanie Carnahan, who is both the director of the play and director of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Alliance's educational support services program. "I wanted something more than just a panel [of speakers] — something interactive."

"Drawing the Shades" fea-

tures four characters who have been sexually assaulted, including a newly out-of-the-closet bisexual who is raped by a male in his brother's room at home and a lesbian who witnesses the rape of her partner and is raped and beaten herself by three men outside of a gay bar.

"It's basically the four characters talking to the audience and telling their story," Carnahan said. "There's no interaction between the characters. There are no backdrops and no props. Its simplicity makes it very dramatic."

Marisa Tabizon, a senior majoring in religious and ethnic studies, plays a heterosexual female who is raped by a heterosexual male in her residence hall room. Tabizon said she fears the audience may not react to their play.

"I think we'll find one of two reactions: either people will not take it seriously or it will really hit home," she said. "It will really hit home if this is something they've experienced or done or had a friend who dealt with it."

Benjamin Litton, a junior majoring in psychology, plays a college student who gets raped by a female at a party.

"The character was drunk and he was feeling pressured to say 'yes' to sex [with this woman at a party] and he's afraid of getting physical with her — he's afraid

### Drawing the Shades

- **WHAT:** Play about four characters who have been sexually assaulted
- **WHEN:** Tonight at 8:30 p.m.
- **WHERE:** Hamilton Complex Cafeteria
- **PRICE:** Free for all residence hall students

of pushing her off," Litton said.

Litton explained the character was taught that hitting women was wrong, even though it was appropriate in this case.

"Rapes [committed] by females do happen," Litton said. "It really hits home to audience members because it's not all sugar-coated. In this depiction, people aren't fine when the play is over. It's not a happy ending. It's very realistic unfortunately."

Litton said he found it difficult to play his part. "It's been really difficult to put myself in this

position because it's the most underreported crime."

Kris Winter, who plays a lesbian who witnesses the gang rape of her partner and is raped herself, said she had difficulties playing her role as well.

"It was a pretty difficult decision to play [a lesbian] because I am a heterosexual woman," said Winter, a senior majoring in educational studies.

"The whole idea about how I would be perceived would be a little scary to me," Winter said. "My sister is a lesbian, and it was very frightening to think that this could happen to her."

Carnahan said: "The play is called 'Drawing the Shades' because there's a line in the play where one of the characters is raped in an alley and when she looks around she sees people drawing in the shades [of their windows]."

"It's calling attention to the fact that sometimes people ignore the problems of rape, particularly on college campuses, and this is a way for them to open the blinds and open their minds to talk about this issue."

Right after the play there will be a slide show and statistics about rape, Carnahan said.

"There will be a chance to ask [the actors who are still in character] questions."

There will also be an opportunity to talk to representatives from Sexual Assault Support Services, the University Counseling Center and the Office of Student Life.

The first performance of "Drawing the Shades" is in the residence halls because the FOWL Players want to focus on living groups, as well as keep the audience manageable. Although the first performance is in Hamilton Complex, the play will be presented in every residence hall by spring term.

Carnahan said there will be another performance in November that will focus on Greek groups.

"Very likely we'll have a final performance for anyone else who would like to see it," Carnahan said. "I'm really excited that the FOWL Players have been able to take off. It's been a great triumph to see a group go from nothing to a hard-core theatrical presentation."

"I'm hoping students will react to it positively as seeing it as a tool to help them respond to the situation," Tabizon said.

## CAMPUS BRIEFS

### Students honor classmate killed in car accident

Chauntal Aarness planned to enter the Peace Corps with her fiancé after she graduated from the University this year.

They hoped to teach English in a Spanish-speaking country. Aarness was an International College student majoring in Political Science. Her fiancé, Kevin McVicker, had recently graduat-

ed with an English degree.

They were killed last summer in a car accident outside Oakridge.

Friends and International College classmates remembered Aarness Monday with a tribute in Riley Hall.

"She was warm, funny, intelligent," said Brad Talley, who befriended Aarness on his first day at the University. "She was a deep thinker, someone who gave of herself. She had a real love of humanity in general."

Aarness and McVicker were returning to Eugene Aug. 12. Another driver behind them tried to pass several cars, even though a semi-truck was fast approaching.

The passing car didn't have enough room and swerved in behind Aarness and McVicker's car. It bumped their rear bumper, spinning them into the truck.

Both were from La Pine, and their funerals brought out the entire town, Talley said. Aarness had been the valedictorian and had befriended almost every-

body, he said.

"It seemed she was on every page of her [high school] yearbook," he said.

She entered the International College as a freshman at the University, said Magid Shirzadegan, assistant director of the Office of International Education and Exchange. The University discontinued the college several years ago, but Aarness entered in time and would have graduated with a degree from the International College, he said.

Shirzadegan said Aarness stood out in the classes he had her in.

"She was very insightful," he said. "She was extremely smart."

Friends said they didn't know what she hoped to do after the Peace Corps. Talley said he was sure it would have had something to do with helping people.

"Her generosity and her kindness really shined through," he said. "I'm going to remember her."