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## Pulitzer-winning play is at Leebrick

'Three Tall Women,' now playing at the Lord Leebrick Theatre, explores life's inherent sadness

By Shannon Sneed  
Entertainment Reporter

Like all other stages of life, old age is something we can never fully prepare for. It sneaks up — perhaps subtly at first, stealing small things from us, like our ability to remember names, and leaving soft footprints on our skin like crow's feet and laugh lines. Later, though, it attacks more aggressively. It sucks away at our memory, leaving only vague, scattered recollections and a desperate need to put into perspective a life that seems to have flown by in an eye blink.

It's this need to understand the inevitable passage of life that becomes the central focus of "Three Tall Women," the Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Edward Albee now on stage at the Lord Leebrick Theatre.

It's the story of a 92-year-old woman whose life is slowly drawing to its close, and she's struggling to come to terms with her past — the triumphs, the pain, the ones who have loved her and left her.

In the first act, with the help of her middle-aged caretaker and a young legal clerk who is sorting out her financial affairs, the woman begins to piece together the scattered fragments of her memory in her search for a way to see the bigger picture.

However, it's only in the second act, when the play takes a creative and brilliantly conceived twist, that the woman's experiences come into full focus for the audience. Through superb, engaging writing and wonderful performances from the three actors, we begin to understand how and why this woman has become who she is and what changes she's been through along the way.

The three women — named A, B and C in the script — are remarkably played by actors of various ages and experience.

Jean Dorl stars as A, the play's central character. Dorl has been acting on stage, in film and on TV since the age of ten. Her performance in "Three Tall Women" is achingly real and sometimes painful, as we witness the inevitable deterioration of her sharp mind and tough spirit.

Kim Donahey plays B, the middle-aged, frumpy caretaker who switches between compassion for the old woman's infirmities and a bitter, dark cynicism. In this play, she skillfully mixes the two to create a complex character, who at once is wistful for what her life could have been and angry for what it actually has become.

Donahey has been appearing in productions at the Lord Leebrick since 1992 and has also appeared in commercials and videos.

Finally, University student Jordan Lyn Florer plays C, the youngest and most idealistic of the three women. In her first performance with the Lord Leebrick Theatre Company, Florer creates a character who looks upon her future with a wide-eyed romanticism. She struggles to understand the two older women, but their jaded outlook seem utterly foreign to her.

The play's director is Hans Christofferson, who has lived in Eugene since 1974 and has directed numerous plays in the area since then. Christofferson's direction is stark and simple, giving the characters a chance to fully develop without distractions.

"Three Tall Women" will run Thursdays through Saturdays, with two Sunday matinees, until Feb. 14. Tickets are \$14 on Fridays and Saturdays and \$12 on Thursdays and Sundays. For more information, call the Lord Leebrick Box Office at 465-1506.



Jean Dorl, Kim Donabey and University student Jordan Lyn Florer play the characters A, B and C. COURTESY PHOTO

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