

Play: Biblical imagery present in 'Fire'

Continued from Page 5A

ater arts major. At the beginning of the play, Engl and Jartchi are naked and playing with each other — what Prichard describes as "newlywed romping." "[Kohout] is very insistent on the couple being in the nude at the beginning of the play," Utz said. "There is a little bit of Adam and Eve imagery in this play," he said. "You are presented this picture of youth and innocence. They haven't left the apartment in three days — you can imagine what they've been doing."

For Utz, the actors' nudity was initially difficult.

"We had to get accustomed to it," he said. "It's something that affects everybody. You can intellectualize and say it's not a big deal, but it's different when you're interacting with them onstage."

There are other Biblical parallels in the play: like Eve, who was the first to fall, Jartchi is the first to sign the insurance forms. She also tries to convince her husband to sign the forms, as well.

"Some of that biblical imagery is uncomfortable in 1998 — mak-

ing the woman complicit first," Utz said.

He said the play is not only about a financial swindle. "It's a sort of an indoctrination into how this particular society works," he said. "Their lives are transformed in that they have become aware of their situation. Other people like the 'firemen' could come by and impose their will upon them. Their innocence disappears."

Utz said the play was controversial, challenging and experimental. "It's ultimately very dark and very sinister, and it really raises questions about how far have we allowed bureaucracy to intrude in our everyday lives," he said.

Prichard agreed, but added, "The play is also really fast and exciting — funny. The mood of the first half of the play is really comic."

Although the absurdity of the situation makes the play humorous, it presented a challenge to the actors.

"The challenge is, 'how do you react to these very absurd things that are real?'" Prichard said. "The toughest part is how do you keep a real character reacting to absurd things — you don't want

to be Tim Conway."

In addition to the con game, bureaucracy is another issue the play deals with. Utz said, "What the 'firemen' do is they really dazzle the newlyweds with a truckload of forms. They're constantly shoving these forms into the newlyweds' faces. It really becomes a question of where the truth lies — is it what happens in the real world or what forms have been signed?"

Utz said he believes the play has a message for a modern audience in the United States. "We all know the effects of bureaucracy on our lives, like health insurance, a mistake on your credit report — because what's written down is taken for reality."

"Fire in the Basement" will be Utz's last University show and the second he has directed at the Arena. "This is really the end [for me]," he said. In the future, Utz hopes to teach theater arts in California.

"Fire in the Basement" will open at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, in the Arena Theatre at Villard Hall. Additional performances will be held at 8 p.m. May 7-9 and May 14-16 in the Arena Theatre. The play lasts about 70 minutes.

Hult: Borge has entertained since 1926

Continued from Page 5A

tle more about his grandfather — like the time his grandfather didn't speak to his wife for three weeks because he didn't want to interrupt her.

Borge loves to deflate the sometimes ego-intensive classical music world, sometimes by playing selections from the "famous" Spanish composer El Beethoven or Claude Debussy's not-so-classic sonata "Clear the Saloon." He might play a composition from Mozart but stop in the middle because he will say he just cannot remember how it goes. Listening to him play, the audience knows Borge is lying. Watching him shirk the tune, it becomes a comical lie.

Jokes, false ignorance and slapstick aside, he sometimes plays compositions all the way through. That's

when the Danish comedian who has been entertaining audiences since 1926 lets you know that he is not merely a funny man.

The prominent violinist and conductor Henri Temianka said of Borge, "There is more to Borge's piano playing than he allows us to hear. But, in those fleeting moments we recognize an elegance of touch, a limpidity, a grace, a transparency, a talent that sets apart the few from the many."

Perhaps that's part of the reason why Borge holds the Guinness World Book of Records for the longest-running one-man show on Broadway.

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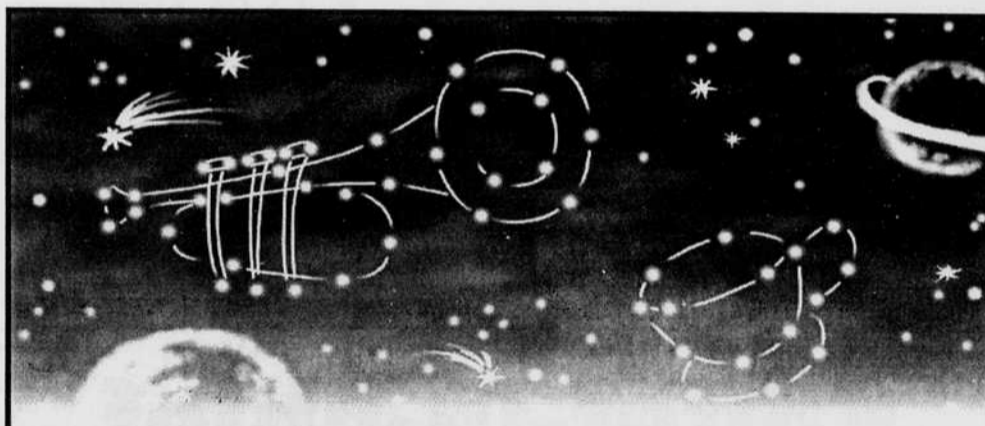


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