

ACE production brings 'bittersweet story' to stage

By Yael Menahem
Oregon Daily Emerald

For people who feel that they have lost touch with their heritage, "The Last Night of Ballyhoo," presented by Actors Cabaret of Eugene, may be an enlightening experience.

The Alfred Uhry play is set in 1939 Atlanta, on the eve of World War II and the world premiere of "Gone With the Wind." Despite these historic events, Atlanta's elitist German Jews are much more concerned with who is going to Ballyhoo, the social event of the year.

The storyline is based around the lives of the Freitags, a fifth-generation, extremely wealthy Southern Jewish family. Since living in America, they have lost sight of their religion — they celebrate Christmas with no regard that the holiday relates to Jesus, not Judaism. With the help of a stranger from New York named Joe Farkas whom Adolf Freitag hires to work in his factory, the family rediscovers their faith.

The play's artistic director Joe Zingo says he remembers seeing a

performance of "Last Night in Ballyhoo" in New York City and recalls how strongly the show affected him personally, considering his own family's history.

Zingo's parents came to the United States from Italy, and the director was the first in his family to be born in this country. Zingo believes that a lot of his heritage was lost as America assimilated his family, so after his exposure to the story, he knew he wanted to direct "Ballyhoo."

"I have to do this [play] because it's something that rekindled, for me, this exploration," Zingo says, referring to a need to reconnect with his ancestry.

Zingo also recognizes how far removed the Freitag family is from being Jewish in the play's plot, and this realization is not lost on Adolf, the head of the family. After his older brother dies, Adolf takes over the family business.

Actor John Muellner, who plays Adolf, feels that his character has no regrets about leaving behind a life of his own to help his brother's widow by taking over the company his brother left behind.

"He loves his family, [he] takes care of them, but he just wants to be left alone," Muellner says. "[His approach] is 'I do my work, I come home, so leave me to my paper and my fat foods.'"

Though the degree to which the family is far removed from its religion is obvious to Adolf, he hires Joe to help him with the company and eventually to aid the family in rediscovering their faith.

Joe is a Brooklyn native of Eastern European heritage and is also Jewish. Some members of the Freitag family, especially Adolf's widowed sister Beulah, feel that Joe is not of the best social standings.

Yet, it is Joe who finally brings cultural awareness to the Freitag family.

"[It's] a bittersweet, little story," he says. "The characters are lovable, they're great to get involved with, and it's very funny. And at the end you see that all you've got to do is be yourself."

"The Last Night of Ballyhoo" opens Friday at the ACE Annex, 39 10th Ave. and continues Saturday night. Future shows are



Courtesy of Actors Cabaret of Eugene

"The Last Night of Ballyhoo" is a complex tale of rediscovering one's family heritage.

scheduled for Jan. 28-29, Feb. 4-5, 11-12 and 8-19. Those shows begin at 8 p.m., with a Jan. 23 matinee slated for a 2 p.m. start.

Tickets are \$14 in advance with

a limited number of student and senior tickets available at \$10. All tickets are \$17 on the day of the show. Call the theater box office number 683-4368 for reservations.

Hospitality, SOUTHERN STYLE

Whether you're in the mood for mac and cheese or alligator, Montage offers late night dining in a great atmosphere

By Yael Menahem
Oregon Daily Emerald

Southern comfort food, served with style, has arrived in Eugene.

The popular Portland-based Montage has opened in town and, luckily for locals, the restaurant offers good, fairly priced food to produce a full stomach, a great atmosphere and a late dinner experience.

Montage's Cajun menu offers some meals diners might already know and a few selections fished out from the bayou, perhaps not as typical.

Ever hear of gator bites? Yes, those are made from alligator. The more daring types can try them cajun-seared for \$8.50. Or maybe sample the spicy frog legs, sautéed with sauces and served with black bread for the same price.

For the budget-minded, if you think that Kraft's Rugsrats-shaped macaroni and cheese is the ultimate meal, then you haven't had

Montage's Old Mac meal, prepared with garlic, heavy cream and Parmesan. A side of warm cornbread and vegetables comes with the dish for only \$4.

Other dinner items include daily fish specials, pan-fried oysters, blackened catfish and, of course, a variety of jambalayas. The Louisiana rice dish is filled with onion, celery, tomato, herbs, garlic and cajun gravy and is topped off with vegetables and cornbread on the side. For various prices, add chicken, catfish, rock shrimp or alligator to the stew.

My adventurous dinner partner had the alligator and loved it, but there's also a selection of inviting linguine dishes for those who want to play it safe.

If you're still itching for a rich dessert after the main course, try the bread pudding with Grandpa's bourbon anglaise — you won't regret the decision. There's also chocolate po du crème with shortbread cookies, key lime pie



or Mississippi mud pie, all priced at \$3.50.

The atmosphere in the restaurant is gothic style but inviting and friendly. The walls are painted in a rich burgundy and massive contemporary paintings hanging in the restaurant reflect religious images.

The waiters wear white jackets with the word "Love" embroidered on one sleeve and "Hate" on the other. They must gravitate toward the "Love" sleeve because Montage's service is relaxed and friendly.

Our server spent time chatting with us about the owner's current renovations of the former popular dance club Perry's, previously located downstairs from the restau-

rant.

The new club won't open for a few more months, but the new speakers, DJ booth, bar and art pieces — complete with flames painted on the walls — sound extremely inviting. Especially for those who like to hang out at a bar until 3 a.m.

Montage, located at 959 Pearl St., is definitely a recommended restaurant, with no other of its kind in Eugene. The establishment is open seven nights a week from 5 p.m. to 3 a.m., so if that craving for macaroni and cheese hits at two in the morning, you know where to go.

Montage is also open for lunch Monday through Friday, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Catharine Kendall Emerald

Eugene's new eatery, Montage, offers Cajun-style food at a pretty decent price. Kathi and Tom Denton (bottom photo) dine out; the restaurant is open

**Come eat with
the Blue Hen today.**

She'll give you a warm fuzzy feeling and some good eats.



Open for
Breakfast 7a.m.

A lotta food for
a little money.

1769 Franklin Blvd. • 683-0780 • Eugene & Florence
BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER



Millennium
Magic
Begins at...

EXCLUSIVELY
Adult

It doesn't have to be dirty to be good.....

EXOTIC • EROTIC
TOYS • GIFTS • BODYWEAR • BOOKS • VIDEOS

1166 South A • Springfield • 726-6969 • Open 24 Hours (Almost)



Conscious Productions presents

The Congos

Friday, January 28
8 pm
Agate Hall (18th & Agate)

\$12 advance: Tickets available at EMU Ticket Office, Face the Music, House of Records, and all Fastixx. \$15 at the door.