

'Top Girls' puts women first

By Jack Clifford
Oregon Daily Emerald

University Theatre's second production of the 1999-2000 season is about being first, but more in the sense of how to get to that place, not necessarily who's there.

"Top Girls" opens Friday night at Robinson Theater at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for the general public, \$8 for University staff and \$5 for students.

Director Beth Cherne was drawn to this particular play, she says, because of its unusual structure, a layered effect of stories and life experiences, with no clear chronological order. She also enjoys the script's universal nature, despite the feminist themes and all-female cast.

"We're all in this together, and the issues that are going on in this play affect everybody," Cherne says. "In an age of something of a conservative backlash, I think it's important that we talk about how those political changes and policy level changes affect people in the real world."

The basic story follows the life of Marlene (Bekki Barnhart), a successful businesswoman in London. The first scene shows her celebrating a recent promotion, and she has invited exceptional women from history, myth

and art to join the party. All of the women stepped out of the boundaries of what women were supposed to do within their own time frames and cultures, Cherne says.

"They are sharing experiences as 'top girls' in a lot of ways," she adds.

While the dinner event plays out, the various attendees are shown preparing themselves, on stage, for the meeting. Costume designer Heather Brooks patterned the dresses and other clothing after the play's subject matter. One costume for the character Patient Griselda is in fact intended to convey immobility.

"The colors for the costume are in ombre style, with the shades darker at the bottom and lighter at the top to represent being rooted to the ground," Brooks says, referring to the cotehardie style of dress.

Brooks also used historical dates in designs. The second act begins with a character named Nell, placed in 1911. Brooks created a hobble skirt, which was designed that year and severely re-



Courtesy University Theatre
Marlene (center, Bekki Barnhart) introduces Dull Gret (left, Rachel Aanestad) to Pope Joan (Yasmin Ravard) in 'Top Girls.'

stricted a woman's movement.

"This play is about all of the restrictions that happen in our society, particularly for women, but not only for women," Cherne says. "It's challenging for the audience and I hope it's challenging on the level of political ideas and the way we value things in our culture."

The week in Entertainment

Thursday, Jan. 27

"Dreamer Examines His Pillow" (play) — Arena Theatre; 8 p.m. \$6 general public, \$5 senior citizens, faculty/staff, \$4 UO students.

"Crimes of the Heart" (play) — Very Little Theatre, 2350 Hilyard St.; curtain time is 8:15 p.m. \$12.

Pacific Wonderland (rock) — Sam Bond's Garage, 407 Blair Blvd.; 9 p.m. \$2-5.

John Andre Herrmann (acoustic) — The Buzz, EMU; 9:30 p.m. Free.

ThaMuseMeant (bluegrass, rock) — Good Times Cafe and Bar, 375 E. Seventh Ave.; 9 p.m. \$4.

'80s Night (dance) — John Henry's, 136 E. 11th Ave.; 10 p.m.; women free, guys \$2.

Leftover Salmon (jam rock) — Wild Duck, 169 W. Sixth Ave.; 8 p.m. \$17.

UO Ensemble Concert (symphony) — Beall Hall; 8 p.m. Free.

Comedy Workout (comedy) — Actors Cabaret of Eugene, 996 Willamette St.; 7:30 p.m. \$5.

Friday, Jan. 28

"Dreamer Examines His Pillow" (play) — Arena Theatre; 8 p.m. \$6 general public, \$5 senior citizens, faculty/staff, \$4 UO students.

"Crimes of the Heart" (play) — Very Little Theatre; curtain time is 8:15 p.m.; \$12.

Lazy Eights (dance music) — Sam Bond's Garage; 9:30 p.m. \$3-5.

Larry Ward Quartet (jazz) — Jo Fed-

erigo's, 259 E. Fifth Avenue; 9:30 p.m. \$2.

W.C. Clarke (blues) — Good Times Cafe and Bar; 9:30 p.m. \$10.

Leftover Salmon (jam rock) — Wild Duck; 8 p.m. \$15 adv., \$17 day of show.

Eclectic Open Mic — The Buzz; 9 p.m. Free.

"Alice" (film series) — 180 PLC; 8 p.m. \$2 UO students, \$3 general public.

Oregon Ballroom (dance) — 200 Gerlinger Hall; 7:30 p.m. \$4 general, \$3 students and faculty.

"Victor/Victoria" (musical) — Silva Concert Hall, Hult Center, One Eugene Center; 8 p.m. \$17.50-35.

Four Past Midnight (acoustic) — Cafe Paradiso, 115 Broadway; 8:30 p.m. \$Free.

The Congos and special guests (roots reggae) — Agate Hall; 8 p.m. All ages; \$12 adv., \$15 at the door.

Saturday, Jan. 29

"Dreamer Examines His Pillow" (play) — Arena Theatre; 8 p.m. \$6 general public, \$5 senior citizens, faculty/staff, \$4 UO students.

"Crimes of the Heart" (play) — Very Little Theatre; curtain time is 8:15 p.m.; \$12.

"Victor/Victoria" (musical) — Silva Concert Hall, Hult Center; 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. \$17.50-35.

Steve Pile (acoustic rock) — The Buzz, EMU; 9:30 p.m. Free.

The Workman Project, Justin King,

self-righteousness and self-respect. The actor is most impressive, however, in the boxing ring.

Once the film takes that turn toward proving the court system wrong and corrupt, the story loses its punch and becomes almost made-for-TV quality.

Most distressing though, is the insertion of a fictional district at-

Gabriel Blue (acoustic, electric rock) — WOW Hall, 291 W. Eighth Ave.; 9 p.m. \$6.

"Doomed Planet" with live music from *Pleaseasour* (movie) — Sam Bond's Garage; 9:30 p.m. \$5.

Paul DeLay Band (blues) — Good Times Cafe and Bar; 9:30 p.m. \$8.

Rubberneck (funk) — Wild Duck Hall; 9 p.m. \$8.

Sleeperwave (rock) — Cafe Paradiso; 8:30 p.m. \$2-5.

Throat, Hand, Poopstick (hard rock) — John Henry's; 10 p.m. \$3.

Larry Ward Quartet (jazz) — Jo Fed-erigo's; 9:30 p.m. \$2.

Sunday, Jan. 30

Robert Walters 20th Congress, Honey Bucket Electric (funk) — John Henry's; 9 p.m. \$7.

Laura Kemp, Peter Wilde and Thais Perkins (acoustic) — Sam Bond's Garage 8 p.m. \$3-5.

Monday, Jan. 31

Kammerer-Dowd Reunion (jazz, faculty artists series) — Gerlinger Alumni Lounge; 8 p.m. \$7 general, \$4 senior citizens.

Tuesday, Feb. 1

Barbara Dzuro (jazz piano) — Jo Fed-erigo's; 8:30 p.m. Free.

That Tuesday Thing (funk, soul) — John Henry's; 11 p.m. Free.

Wednesday, Feb. 2

The Benjamins (funk) — Good Times Cafe and Bar; 9:30 p.m. \$3.

Justice League of America (dance hall house) — John Henry's; 10 p.m. women free, guys \$2.

Hurricane

continued from page 2B

ton does a great job bringing forth the sense of dementia such solitude might create.

Overall, as an angry man tired of white society's oppression, Washington expertly conveys Carter's

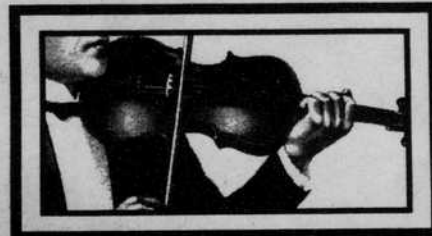
torney, played by the usually on-target Dan Hedaya, who is not this time around. Hedaya's character oozes with racism the way a sore drips with pus. (Yes, Hedaya is that repugnant.) Yet, he never existed, according to a New York Times report, which seems an odd juxtaposition to Carter's 19 years of searching for the ultimate truth.

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