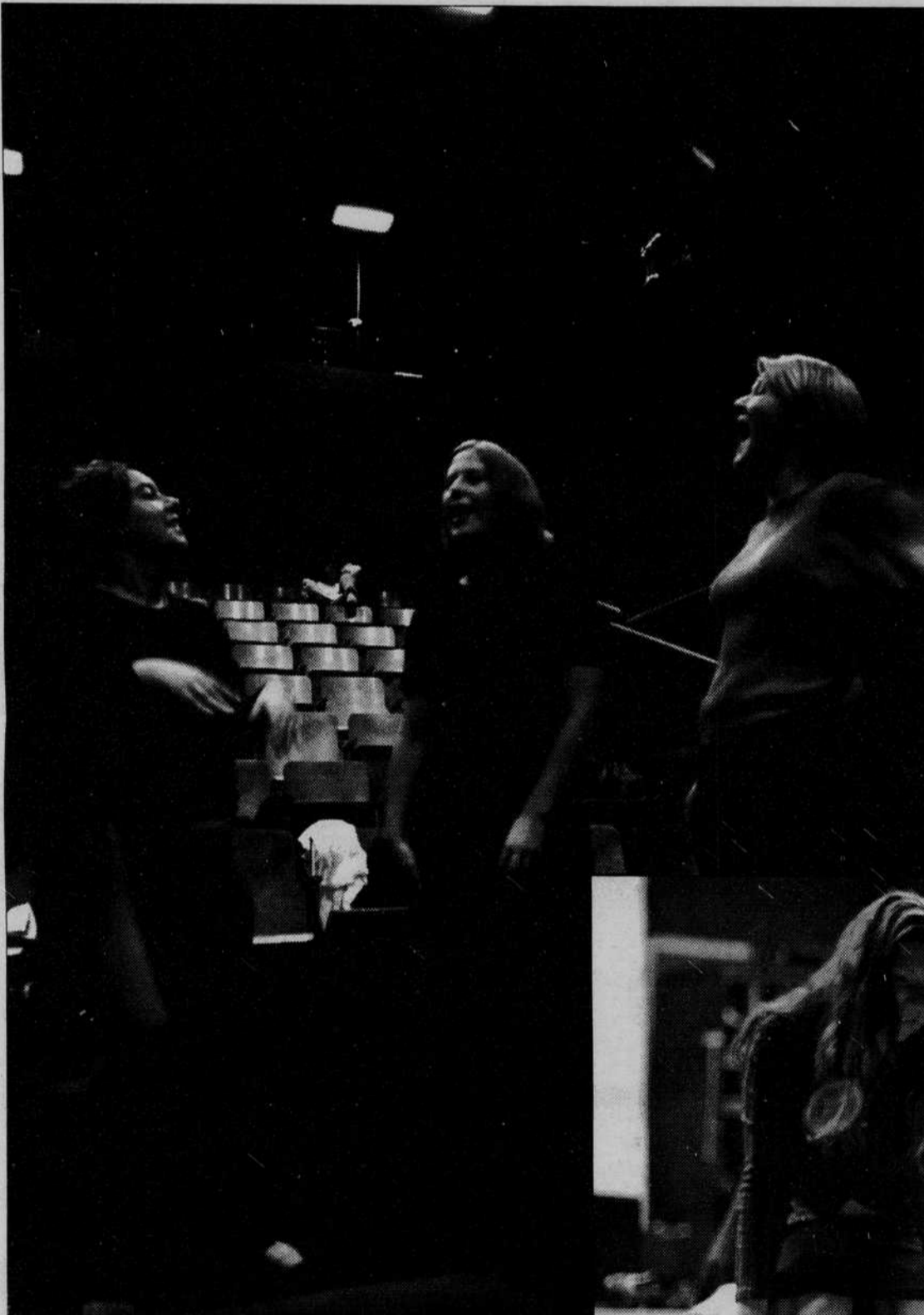


# REVIEWS

PULSE EDITOR: MONICA HANDE

## 'Prostitute' raises questions



■ The student production takes on a much different setting than the original play



### 'The Respectful Prostitute'

★★★★☆

By Mason West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The moral backbone of American life, or perhaps just life in general, has just been ripped out *a la* Mortal Kombat in "The Respectful Prostitute," a play by Jean-Paul Sartre.

The show, opening in the Pocket Playhouse today at 5 p.m., deals with the darker side of humanity and morality. More specifically, it poses the question: What does it take for people to abandon their morals?

This question is even apparent in how one interprets the title of the play. Is it that there is a prostitute who is trying to be respectful, or, to make "prostitute" a verb, is the respectful person one who prostitutes his or her morals?

Although Sartre set the play in the American South during the 1940s, director Kim Harmon has reset it in World War II Germany. None of the dialogue has been changed, which may cause the audience to have some difficulty associating the name "nigger," which Sartre uses in his

play as a slur against African-Americans, with the non-black Jewish or homosexual characters that Harmon has created.

The play itself is about a prostitute who has witnessed a black man being murdered by a white man without cause. The white men have created an alibi, saying the black man and his companion tried to rape the prostitute and the white man came in and brought justice. The prostitute is then confronted by people during the play trying to break her resolve to the truth and sign an affidavit agreeing with the alibi.

"It's not pleasant, but I think it's fascinating," said Harmon.

Harmon's interest in the script not only shows in the acting but in the set and lighting design. The visual aspect that Harmon has created for her play is an important part of how she conveys the message to the audience.

"I wanted to set the play up so visually, you see a different story than people are talking about," Harmon said.

The lighting is dramatic and well above average for a Pocket production. The lights and set are designed in the Brechtian style, which is specifically minimalistic.

"The style was designed so that audiences can see what is going on in the play and process it intellectually but not get involved in it emotionally," Harmon said.

This creates a certain problem for the audience because the play is acted emotionally. To watch that kind of openness without any sort of sympathy is irritating. The goal is certainly to be made uncomfortable with the situation, but audiences may withdraw from the play because of lack of desire to engage in it intellectually.

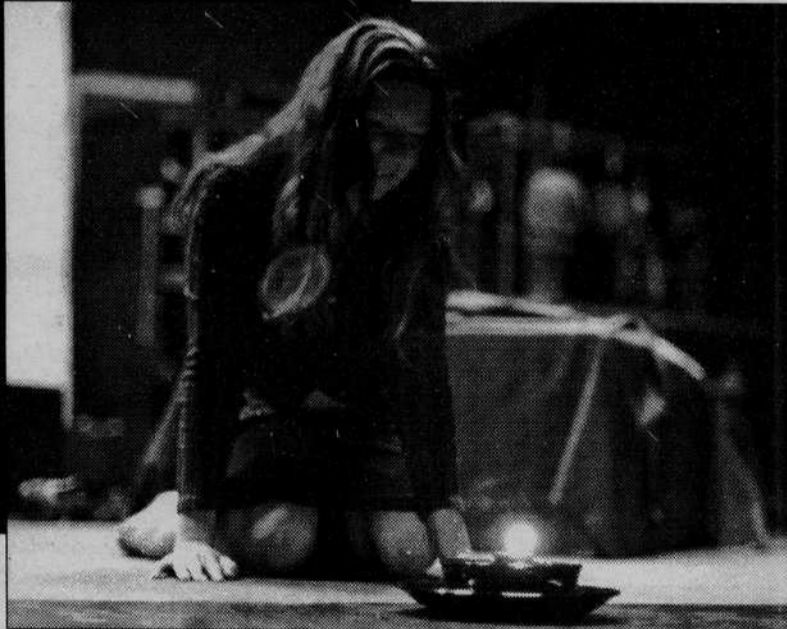
Harmon accomplishes her goal of showing one person's moral corruption and the effects of that process. Whether the audience members take the play home with them and question their own breaking point is up to them.

Without any judgment, the play is an interesting adaptation and experiment in theater. It isn't good for a fun night out on the town, but if you want to go sit and drink coffee and smoke afterward — if that's your thing — this will give you a good starting ground for an interesting conversation.

The play shows at 5 p.m. today through Saturday in the Pocket Playhouse.

Dan Brunell Emerald

(Above) Katie Plien, Sarah Turnquist and Talia Thelen (left to right) warm up for Sunday night's rehearsal, and Annie Branson (right) puts emotion into her character before the production runs before an audience tonight.



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