

# Theater prepares to make audience laugh

■ 'She Stoops to Conquer' will open the University Theatre's season this weekend

By Monica Hande  
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's been awhile since the University Theatre has tried to generate laughs from a Robinson Theatre audience. But that's about to change beginning this weekend.

The University Theatre will open its new season Friday with Oliver Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer," a late-18th-century comedy, and director Jack Watson is ready to make audiences laugh.

"It's not a play that's going to teach anyone a moral lesson," said Watson, the head of the theater arts department. "It's pure slap-stick comedy."

Watson said Goldsmith created the play because he was determined to bring comedy back to the stage.

The story, which takes place during a single night, centers on two rich, single men, Young Marlow and George Hastings. Comedy prevails in their attempts to court two young women, Kate Hardcastle and Constance Neville.

A practical joke by Kate's stepbrother, Tony Lumpkin, results in a case of mistaken identity that sets off a chain of humorous events.

"The whole play is about tricks," said Bekki Barnhart, who plays Kate. "It's all about mistaken identities."

Although Barnhart, a senior theater arts major, has acted in several University Theatre productions, "She Stoops to Conquer" is her first experience in a comedy, as is the case for Brian Henderson, who plays Hastings.

"I don't really consider myself a funny guy by nature," said Henderson, a senior philosophy major, so this play has provided a challenge for him.

Regardless, both actors apparently demonstrated the qualities Watson sought during casting.

"In the final process, I was looking for two specific

elements," Watson said, "a grasp of the 'style' of the period — a certain elegance and ease of manner — and a willingness to take some chances and be creative."

And creativity was definitely something the whole cast and crew brought to the production, Watson said.

Watson "has given us free reign to play with the script," Henderson said, referring mainly to improv-

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Courtesy of University Theatre  
Young Marlow (Quinn Mattfeld) attempts to court Kate Hardcastle (Bekki Barnhart) in 'She Stoops to Conquer'

# LCC uses authenticity to build a better 'Mousetrap'



(above) Mollie Ralston (Rachel Beck) and Miss Casewell (Laurel Sturgis) interrogate Mrs. Boyle (Dandy Pond) while (right) Sergeant Trotter (Chalan Moon) questions Mr. Paravicini (Patrick Torelle).

■ The long-running Agatha Christie play will feature a set and accents faithful to past productions

By Mason West  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Lane Community College is hoping to make a killing with its fall play, "The Mousetrap." The play, by famous mystery writer Dame Agatha Christie, will have audiences asking "whodunit" starting Friday.

The director, LCC theater arts

professor Eileen Kearney, decided to produce this show at LCC after remembering her first time seeing the show in London, where it is still running. One of the longest-running plays ever, "The Mousetrap" has been performed in London for the last 48 years.

"It took off and never stopped," Kearney said. "Then it became kind of a cult thing."

The play is a textbook murder mystery. The nine characters all enter the stage fitting the physical description of a murderer who the audience has heard about from a radio broadcast. From the beginning, everyone is a suspect, and that is exactly what Kearney wants.

As a form of audience participation, there will be a vote box at intermission where audience members can guess who they think the murderer is. The prize for a right answer is a two-for-one coupon to LCC's spring play, "You Can't Take it With You."

Adding to the mystery of the characters is the fact that the majority of their real-life counterparts are new to the LCC stage. Kearney put off casting until the start of the new school year purposely to see what new people had to offer.

"Some directors like to cast a fall show over the summer," Kearney said. "But I didn't want to, because at LCC we get a fresh, new batch of

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