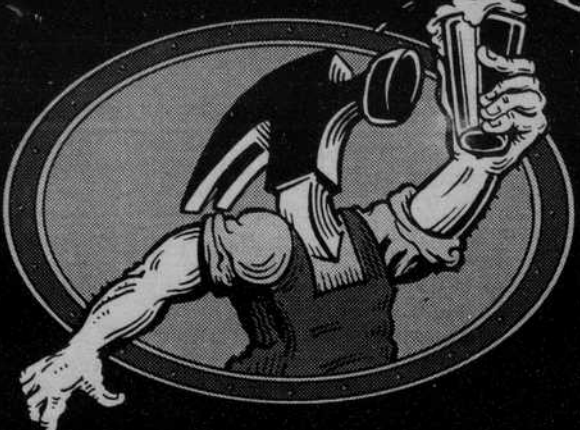


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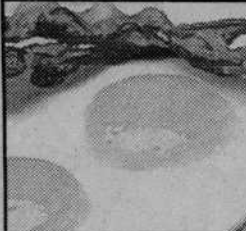
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Show reveals colors of love

■ Emotional turmoil fills 'Betrayal,' the latest Pocket Playhouse production dealing with affairs of the heart



PLAY REVIEW

'Betrayal'
 Pocket Playhouse
 ★★★★★

By Mason West
 Oregon Daily Emerald

Robert's wife has been having an affair. But the affair is with his best friend. The affair has been going for seven years.

That is where the appropriately named play, "Betrayal," begins. Emma, Robert's wife, meets with Jerry, the best friend, after two years of separation to cope with the fact that during their affair, Robert was having a few of his own.

This is the end of the play's timeline, and from there it goes back through six different periods of the affair, coming to a close at its beginning.

Knowing the start and finish of the play, the audience relies on character dynamics for intrigue. But instead of creating those dynamics with excessive dialogue, the play uses silence to let the audience ponder what isn't being said. This technique was perfected by the author, British playwright Harold Pinter, and has come to be known jokingly as the "Pinter pause."

To add to the verbal distance of the characters, director Jon Sharpy has assigned each character a color for visual distinction. The colors are placed in set places on the



Mason West Emerald
 Emma, played by Kelcey Stratton, and her husband Robert, played by Phil Meyer, discuss Emma's affair with Jerry, played by Shoji Watanabe (not pictured).

stage where characters will engage in involved, intimate conversations while standing 20 feet apart. The colors can also be projected on the back wall to suggest the characters' presence in the subtext.

The total effect is very intriguing. Of course, it would have no pull if the actors weren't doing their part to sustain the action. Fortunately, all three actors carry their difficult parts with surprising skill. I say surprising because this is a play that deals with married thirtysomethings and simulating that experience is not easy for college actors.

Kelcey Stratton deserves special praise for her performance as Emma. The force of her emotions (and she has many fast, polar changes) is subtle but powerful. Her color, green, represents a contrast and a tension between Robert's yellow and Jerry's blue — it's not for envy.

Phil Meyer also gives the best performance that I have seen from him as Robert. In a role that could be

overblown with anger, he keeps cool and hints at a deeper evil nature. This facade is created largely by talk about books (both he and Jerry are in the publishing business). With superficial topics, Robert can be both funny and frightening.

Though the play is difficult at times, the audience is kept distant enough from the action that it will not be troubled much after leaving the theater. In addition to spicing up the visuals, Sharpy's effects subconsciously remind people that what is happening is not real; they create an emotional buffer.

The other thing that helps the audience deal with the emotion is the reverse structure of the play. Having already seen the worst, the play ends on a high note. For some odd reason, it is easier to think about the joy of a starting relationship than to dwell on its inevitable end. Go figure — but go see it.

"Betrayal" runs today, Friday and Saturday at the Pocket Playhouse in Villard Hall at 5 p.m. A \$1 donation is suggested.

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