

## X/WIVES' Buried Personalities

by Sandra de Helen

"Buried Personalities" is an evening of one act plays recently presented at the Echo Theatre by a new women's theater group called X/WIVES. The pieces were all written by Portland women with the exception of the first piece, "Lemonade" by James Prideaux.

The performance was well done and well received. It had a professional look to it. "Lemonade" got the evening off to a good start. The play is cleverly written, with lots of funny lines. Two women set up roadside lemonade stands side by side and proceed to reveal their dissatisfaction with their lives by discussing their morbid fantasies about their families. They can hardly tell what is real and what isn't, and alternately support and attack each others' lies. What is real is the obvious: women are oppressed, and women who spend their lives working inside the home often feel useless at middle age, just when women are at their natural peaks.

One disturbing factor in this particular production is the age of Edith. She has been married 25 years, so by my calculations, should be 45-50, 55 years old tops. But as portrayed by Carol Steinel, she appears to be closer to 75. When actors are playing "older" characters, it is important to be as realistic as possible. It helps to compare with real people. For example, Gloria Steinem celebrated her 50th birthday a year or two ago. Otherwise, this piece was excellently done.



Sarazan Torelle James, Kelley Edwards, Carol Steinel, Tillay Christensen, and Kathay Duff in **Buried Personalities.**

Carol and Tillay Christensen (Mabel) both displayed appropriate emotions, and their timing was outstanding.

"Walt was Wrong" written by director Kathay Duff, is a new look at an old fairy tale.

Here we see Sleeping Beauty and Malificent confront destiny and control it. Sleeping Beauty is not the perfect young maiden she looks like. Instead, she's a bored teenager who is into drugs. Malificent is bent on acting out her evil fantasy of putting the entire country to sleep for 100 years, all because she wasn't invited to the party when SB was born. SB pouts, "but I was just a baby!" She's right, of course, and after some conversation, they decide to work together and SB's drug habit is neatly dismissed ("You can't fly when you're high!")

"2 Smile and 2 Frown," by Carol Steinel is one of those plays that leaves some members of the audience going, "I don't get it." It is so full of symbolism that everybody knows she is supposed to get something, and lots of us worry that we didn't get what we were supposed to.

This play could use some more work by the playwright, just to clarify matters. If the central point were a little more pointed, and the symbolism more universal, this would be a very good play. It certainly contains all the

right elements, and personally, I like seeing plays about everyday relationships between Lesbians.

I wrote "Beauty Standards" with Kate Kasten back in 1978. It's a piece about the oppression of women by Madison Avenue. A world in which the average woman preparing herself for a day at work on the outside uses 23 products!

The final play of the evening is "Stacy," and is about the Green River murders. Sometimes I think Kathay Duff is the only person doing anything about those Green River murders. As one audience member said, "I wish this piece were out of date." When Kathay first told me she was writing this play, I thought it was gruesome, and wondered why anyone would want to write about it. After seeing it, I can only wonder why we aren't all writing about it.

"Stacy" points out how once again, women are trivialized. Because the women being murdered are sometimes prostitutes, people say to themselves, oh well, what do they expect. Well, women do not expect to be murdered! And we must not expect or think that women deserve to die, to be murdered, no matter what we do for a living.

"Stacy" stays with you, long after the

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