

Shields reviews English theater

By Kelly Laughlin

The Print
There's more than one way to spend a summer, and while most of us stayed at home with an empty tank of gas in our car, Jack Shields, Chairman of the Theater Arts and Communications Department, did something a bit different for an inflation-ridden vacation.

Shields and two friends planned the trip two years before its realization. They purchased a Morris 1800 sedan automobile that was waiting for them when they landed in Manchester, England, via Pan American Airlines. Powered by three-dollar-a-gallon gas, they saw over 20 theatrical productions and nearly 60 theaters. "We took time out to test the German and English beers," he laughed.

Shields observed that English theater is not much different than our own with respect to the balance between good and bad performances. "It's possible to see an excellent production one night, and an absolutely atrocious play the next, just like in America," he said. Shields said the American

musical comedies are not approached in London with as much "exuberance and splash," as, say, one performed on Broadway, but when it comes to Shakespearean drama, according to Shields, the British can't be beat. "They're absolute naturals when it comes to dialect. They can do practically any accent: English, German, American, Swedish, and so well, that you can't see through them," he said.

An aspiring theater student may have a better chance making it in the field if they trained in Europe, at least sooner. While most American talents don't break in until their years of training are completed, the British or English actor will know between two and five years after they've started to train, that they can make it in the business, according to Shields.

The incentives for work are greater, too. In England and surrounding cities and towns nearly every community has at least one performing company or theatrical facility. "That's enough to get anyone excited about getting into the



LONG TRIP, LONG SIP—Jack Shields, theater instructor, celebrates the end of a 10-mile walk in honor of a hospital in the city of Mold in South Wales. Photo courtesy of Jack Shields

business," said Shields.

Shields gathered his most valuable theatrical facts in the city of Mold in Wales. Though Mold is about the size of Milwaukee, he said, it is a bedroom town to the larger city Chester. There, a highly developed theater awareness has developed. The city contains a 480-seat theater, a 200-

seat theater and a 680-seat movie theater. Chester's major source of income comes from a television studio for the Wales BBC network.

The head of the College theatrical department hopes to get a two-semester sabbatical approved and return to Mold to "see to what extent these processes can be applied to our

proposed performing arts complex. Our proposed

theater is about two years down the road, but it is needed. We simply don't have enough space. Our theater at the college holds about 162 people. That's the largest meeting room next to the Randall Gym," he said.

Artist paints with feelings of harmony

By Kelly Laughlin

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Leland John, art instructor, says his calling as an artist surrounds his desire to paint his feelings of the harmony between man and nature."

While John admits that this attitude isn't always evident in society, there can be no question of the harmony in his untitled 15-foot by five-foot painting that adorns a wall of the college cafeteria.

The painting depicts many of Oregon's historical figures such as pioneer John McLoughlin, Peter Skene Odgen, furtrapper Joe Meek, Estacada businessman Phillip Foster, and others. John's work places them in a high contrast foreground, with the misty Willamette River behind them. Rather than risking confusion by painting a collage of faces and names, John has placed the area's forebearers in a scene that is believable, and possibly could have taken place in their lifetimes.

Funding for the project, which is near completion, was provided by a group called the "Leaves" from the Rose Villa Retirement Center in Milwaukie. The group wrote a book about their family history, called "Leaves from Family Trees," and suggested the historical flavor for the painting.

Leland John's rendition took an amazing one month to reach the final stages of completion. "I still need to work out a few details, though," he said. There are a few hands missing, and the background needs some proportioning done to it. It's really a lot of little things," he said.



LOCAL SPONSOR—The 15 x 5 foot painting was commissioned by a group called the "Leaves" of the Rose Villa Retirement Center in Milwaukie. Photo by Kelly Laughlin

things," he said.

The artist, obviously pressed for time on the project, used a quick drying acrylic base on the canvas, and detailed the work in oils. "I would have liked to have had a whole year to do the work in, but I simply hadn't the time."

One objective John hopes to accomplish in his large-scale work is to allow the viewer to practically venture into the

painting. "Instead of the audience simply viewing the painting, they can experience it in a broader sense, and

become involved in its various details. If the painting were,

say, three feet taller, it would have had more of that quality."

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