

The Arts

College receives guest director

By D. Dietrich
Of The Print

She may be called a guest director at Clackamas Community College, but Merrill Lynn Taylor is considered a veteran and a common asset to stages up and down the West Coast.

Taylor is now in charge of production of the college's winter term play "Towards Zero" by Agatha Christie. Theater Director Jack Shields has been substituted by other directors in the past, but only while on sabbatical or due to illness.

This year Shields opted to recruit a guest director to benefit the students' by enabling them to sample a different director's style and influence on a production.

The idea is one Shields has entertained all along and he said he believes, "one of the great values of my education was being able to study and work with six different directors during college."

Taylor is a woman Shields describes as, "A lady of monumental skills," and a "sparkling actress." Her extensive list of achievements in the arts surpasses allowable space but highlights include attending the Guild Hall School in London, performing in the Stanford Repertory Company as well as many others in

California. She will earn her master's degree in theater arts at Portland State University upon completion of one French final.

Taylor performed at the college last year in her role as Mrs. Gamadge in "The Best Man." Her background in theater includes a comprehensive career in dance theater, management, directing and acting.

She said that she likes the community college setting because "there is a good variety of people, ages and experience." Taylor has also directed at a community college in New Mexico. Her description of the atmosphere at a community college is "vital."

The play for winter term was selected before Taylor arrived on the scene, but she said she was pleased with the choice of a Christie mystery. Taylor's interests are directed toward feminist writers and women in literature. Christie is one of few novelists that adapted and wrote novels as plays.

If a tag was to be put on Taylor's career she said it would be in the "performance arts." She expressed an enjoyment in arts management, but would continue to expand on her experiences as both an actress and director. "It does a



Guest director Merrill Lynn Taylor makes comments to Neil Hass and Marlyce Baird during play rehearsal. Taylor is directing the college's production of Agatha Christie's "Towards Zero."
Photo by Joel Miller

director a lot of good to act," she said, adding that directing gives one a "broader view as an actress."

Taylor's role as guest director involved the selection of the cast, which was completed during finals week of fall term. Now she must see that rehearsals run smoothly, conflicting schedules are ironed out and, as opening night draws near, the play's characters find their motive and carry out the emotions called for.

She admitted the variety of experience in the cast creates some difficulties. While beginners take more time for

coaching, stage veterans need to work off bad habits. Taylor called the mixing of new and old actors at a community college a "nourishing thing," and has found the atmosphere at the college "very warm."

One of the assets she cited about the college's production is the addition of David Smith English, who has been contracted to be the set designer for the Theater Department this year. Taylor worked with English before during Pacific University's production of "A Doll's House." She said she found him "really a pleasure to work with."

After the college's production is completed, Taylor

plans to work on a one woman show she's putting together which will include the works of two women playwrights, Brecht and Strindberg, and other works by women poets.

The college's production of "Towards Zero" is scheduled to run March 7, 8, 9, 15 and 16 at 8 p.m. with a matinee showing on March 17. The play will also be taken to the Coaster Theater at Cannon Beach during spring break and will run March 28, 29 and 30 at 8 p.m.

Taylor said she believes the experience of taking a show on the road is invaluable for its requirement of the company's need to adapt to new surroundings.

Prince

Purple Rain

By J. Jason
Of The Print

Question: Who can masterfully produce a raw guitar sound, keep a steady dance beat, bend your ears with strange keyboard sounds and, basically still be considered a "soul" performer in most record stores?

Well, the answer shouldn't be too far from your record collection, if you are like any one of the millions of people that have boosted "Purple Rain" to the top of Billboard's album chart for nearly 15 straight weeks.

Prince, the nasty one responsible for all of this, has consistently evolved his music from a mere Michael Jackson sound-alike, to a new sound all his own. Countless magazines tend to compare him to the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Little Richard and Elvis Presley.

Rather than comparing him with anyone, I like to think of his work as the beginning of a new style of music, just as controversial as rock and roll.

The first hint of this new musical style occurred in 1979, two-thirds of the way through a disco-ish second effort album called "Prince." All of a sudden a loud guitar, nothing short of Jimmy Page, burst out. The song "Bambi"

Music Review

will go down in history as the spark that lit the Revolution. And who is behind the Revolution? Prince's current lineup of band members are, Lisa Coleman, Wendy, Bobby Z, Brown Mark and Matt Fink.

Okay, maybe the success of Prince owes much to the fact that a movie strategically weaves this masterful music into its soundtrack. Maybe it's because Prince himself stars as the main character. Maybe the fact that this music is a departure from anything before it isn't a reason at all. The success of this album proves that the general public is ready to venture into the realm of Prince's lyrics, too. I won't even mention anything about his concerts, except that in

many states concert-goers must be 18 to enter the show.

Prince writes about such things as sex, sex and even sex. Occasionally he will incorporate a computer (Computer Blue), a car (Little Red Corvette) or a dove (When Dove's Cry) into these lyrics, but generally sex is the rule. This adds to his music and most definitely to his show. His lyrics, seemingly as crude as can be, are basically tongue-in-cheek and many times contain hidden innuendos.

The movie can give you most of the information needed to better understand this young man from Minnesota. It will take several enjoyable listenings to understand what each song means. "1999,"

Prince's double album made in 1982, is the best example of his sexual innuendos. "Darling Nikki," is the best example from Purple Rain.

The final astounding characteristic about Purple Rain is the quality of three songs, including the title song, which are recorded live, yet sound just as polished as and more powerful than the rest of the album.

What we all have to watch out for next, other than Prince's next LP, is who will attempt to challenge him. No one is near Prince at his own game now, but if this blend of all forms of rock takes hold like it now seems to be doing, someone is bound to pick up on his success secrets.

