

The Arts

Civic's "The Bat" suffers misdirection

By D. Dietrich
Of The Print

"The Bat" opened Friday night with a misdirected flight pattern on the Mainstage of the Portland Civic Theater. This 1940's mystery is a culmination of whodunnit plots through the decades and the title hosts the nickname of a rampaging psychotic without fangs.

Sound funny yet? Well it's not, but it should be. At least more often than not, which is the glaring error in this sluggish rendition. The storyline is innately filled with tongue-in-cheek situations and cliché's, which are handled with an inconsistent mixture of melodrama and sarcasm.

The best performances were given by the actors who tried to put a surrealistic or refreshing touch to what is without effort a tired plot. Although she began with promising style, leading lady Miss Cornelia Van Gorder, played

by Mary Marsh, too soon takes on shades of Katharine Hepburn and a staidness that doesn't fit the colorful eccentricity that the dialogue refers to.

Van Gorder is accompanied by her faithful secretary and companion of 20 years, Lizzie, who tries to give that needed exaggerated character, but her efforts only tend to highlight the less energetic flow of the remaining cast (butler excluded). Claudette Webster plays Lizzie as a slightly frumpy, yellow-hearted sidekick with a classically recurring need to be slapped out of semi-hysterical states.

The play is based around Van Gorder, a mystery writer who is trying to get some work done by retreating to a creaking, Victorian-style house on Long Island for the summer. Soon the plot thickens with the discovery that the house formerly belonged to a bank president who recently died after his bank was the victim of a

million-dollar embezzlement.

Immediately the fact becomes obvious that someone doesn't want Van Gorder in the house, as she receives not-so-subtle warnings to vacate the premises. These threats only serve to whet her mystery-writer appetite, however, and she begins a personal investigation with the aid of a police detective.

Through "The Bat," the feeling is that the cast is trying to take themselves too seriously, instead of playing the show with the kind of kooky attitude needed to keep it from stagnating. The few moments that did come off with the right kind of light-heartedness seemed too accidental to be appreciated.

"The Bat" will run Thursday, Friday and Saturdays at 8 p.m. through April 13. A Special Actors Benefit will be held Sunday, March 24 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$7.50 adults, \$6.50 students and seniors.

College 'whodunnit' opens

By Julie Miller
Of The Print

Opening night for the Agatha Christie play "Towards Zero" is set for Thursday night, March 7 at 8 p.m. in the McLoughlin Theater.

Tickets cost \$2 for students and \$3 for adults. "Towards Zero" is Clackamas Community College's winter term theater production and is scheduled to run March 8, 9, 15 and 16 at 8 p.m., with a special 2:30 p.m. matinee showing on March 17.

The play is directed by guest director Merrill Lynn Taylor, an idea that came from Communications and Theater Arts Chairperson Jack Shields.

"When the idea was given to me a couple of years ago to have a guest director, it sounded great and it still does. This cast has had an opportunity to

work with a talented director with different styles and processes other than my own. That can only turn out better in the long run," he said.

"We were very lucky to get Merrill Lynn Taylor at this time. She is very busy professionally," Shields added.

Shields said opening night should be "smashing. Things are coming along beautifully. Every production has its problems and one never knows from what direction one will get blind-sided. This one is uncommonly trouble-free and smooth. The production will be sterling," he said.

Shields is also satisfied with the cast of the play. "The cast is very strong and artistically well-prepared. We have a good balance of the more-experienced actors with the less-experienced ones," Shields said.

Music groups showcase talent

"We will be performing traditional and contemporary music spanning 300 years," Gary Nelson, music instructor and wind ensemble director said of the upcoming Clackamas Community College wind ensemble and College chorale concert.

March 10 is the date set for this traditional end-of-the-term performance, which will be held at the Portland Art Museum.

"The show will exhibit the culminated talents of the students involved," Nelson said.

Nelson expects a mixed au-

dience at the concert. "It should go well. We have a varied program of well-prepared material," he said. The performance will also include a march written by second-year student Kevin Maxwell.

After the performance the two groups will travel to the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall to open for the Oregon Symphony.

"I think that it should go well. We will present a good sampling of Schubert," Choral Director Lonnie Cline said of the upcoming performance.



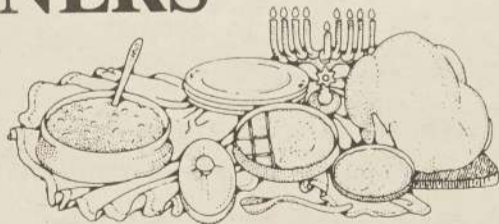
During dress rehearsal, Superintendent Battle (Marlyce Baird) and P. C. Benson (Dennis Roy Osborne), Inspector Leach (Joe Schenck), Mathew Treves (Jim Nicodemus), Kay Strange (Dennis Poore) put on finishing touches. The College's production of "Towards Zero" opens March 7.

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