

ENTERTAINMENT

Communications Department's 'Happiest of the Three' fun for all

by Michelle Walsh
Staff Writer

"The Happiest of the Three," a French farce written by Eugene Labiche and Edmond Gondinet, is a funny way to look at adultery. Is that a good enough incentive to get you to see CCC's winter play?

The eleven quirky characters are played by Rod Ragsdale (Krampach), Dona Miller (Hermance), Devin Cooke (Petunia), Marcy Andersen (Lisbeth), Christina Bryant (Berthe), Lisa Hartenstien (Isaure), Pamela McConnell (Hermance's Aunt), David Gloden (Marjavel), Joe Schenck (Ernest), Bob Ems (Jobelin).

"It takes place in 1890 in this real rich guy's mansion (Marjavel). His wife has died and now he has a new wife," Ragsdale said of the story. "Krampach and his wife (Lisbeth) move from Germany to work in Paris, France for Marjavel. As the wheels of the play turn, I stick in a crowbar and screw things up."

"He believes in justice being served," Ragsdale says of his character. "An eye for an eye-type person."

Krampach's part in the story goes like this: "Someone in Germany stole Krampach's money and he moves to Paris to find out who did it. Krampach works for Marjavel as a butler. It's very spicy...a laugh a second."

"I've been doing theatre for 10-12 years and this is one of my top two favorite plays."

How do you parallel the play to real life? "Fact is stranger than fiction," Ragsdale chuckled.

"I've noticed a lot of growth in her since we started," Dona Miller said of her character, Hermance. "She has a zest for life. She's a lot of fun to be around, but I don't think you see that in the play. 'I play for fun,' Miller said of theatre work. "I've been acting for eleven years," she started at Portland Civic Theatre at age 13, and studied drama at the American Academy in

Pasadena, California. Miller was out of drama "for a while, and now I'm back. I'd lost my confidence. Having a director like Merrill Lynn really lets you go for it. She's enthusiastic and helps you get enthusiastic. The play is slapstick, and good for me to break the ice." Before one rehearsal, Merrill Lynn had cast members play hide and seek. "After they were finished, I overheard Merrill Lynn explain to them that it was to feel the sense of fun the characters have in the play. Miller ran off the stage to me and smiled, 'See what I mean by a sense of fun?'"

"She's the one I wanted to be when I read the scrip," Devin Cooke remarked of her character Petunia. "She epitomizes what romance to the French is - a lot of fun. I wish romance could be that way." Cooke's parents were actors, and she started acting at the Firehouse Theatre in Portland at age nine. She has also done technical work, directing and producing, but has no desire to go to Hollywood. "I act for fun and the competition in Oregon is not heavy," she smiled.

"I like my character because she is a character," said Marcy Andersen, who plays Lisbeth. "I like comedy because I can play it up." This is Andersen's third play and "Puts everything into this. This is what I want to do." How's Merrill Lynn for a director? "I've learned much from Merrill Lynn...trying different things, and she gives a lot of freedom to the actor. She's honest; if it works it works, if it doesn't it doesn't."

The character Berthe is "really determined to get what she wants," in the words of Chrissy Bryant, who plays her. "Everybody's scheming to get their own way. I've always been interested in acting. I did some stuff in high school. I never knew there was so much detail."

Pamela McConnell is Hermance's Aunt, along with doing props. "I'm kind of a filler character to make the house seem



Joe Schenck (Ernest) and Dave Gloden (Marjavel) in a scene from "The Happiest of the Three."

like there are more people in it."

"I like him more now than at the beginning (of the rehearsals)," said Dave Gloden, who portrays Marjavel. "He was a bit too stiff at first. He knows something is going on, but he is willing to have fun with it. Merrill Lynn has pushed me a bit. It's been more of a learning experience."

"We are treating a serious subject in farce. In a farce, no one gets hurt," said Bob Ems, who plays Jobelin. What is Jobelin like? "He is a very loyal man - in his own way. Merrill Lynn's intensity is amazing...I've learned a great deal." Ems was in the Portland Mime Theatre before working at CCC. "I'm a farmer by trade. Acting is a wonderful

terror I need every now and then."

It runs March 3, 4, 5, 11, 12 at 8 p.m., and 13 at 2:30 p.m. in McLoughlin Hall. Two dinner theatre performances to benefit Friends of CCC's levy campaign effort on the 10 and 13. Dinner is at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$15 single, \$25 couple.



Joe Schenck, Dave Gloden, and Dona Miller (Hermance) chat over a cup of tea.



Ernest and Hermance have a heart to heart talk.

March 2, 1988

Page 5

