

# The Foreigner comes to campus

The fall play uncovers what really happens when you think nobody is listening

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A&E Editor

Think about the things that you say when you are alone or when there is someone around that cannot understand you. Now imagine if someone could understand. Don't you think that it is kind of scary to think of the things that they might have heard you saying?

*The Foreigner* brings this situation into perspective. The play is set in Betty Meek's Fishing Lodge Resort, Tilghman County, Georgia, during the recent past.

There, Charlie Baker (the Foreigner), played by John Renner, is put in a situation where he does not want to be talked to because he is very shy. He gets flustered when engaged in conversation and many times finds that he has nothing to say. He does not want to be thought rude, so his dear friend Froggy, played Erin Elizabeth Adkisson, who brought him to the lodge assures him that she will fix everything. She will make sure that he will not be talked to and not appear to be rude.

The plot then takes a twist: Froggy tells the owner of the lodge, Betty Meeks, played Samantha Tennyson, that Charlie is a foreigner and that while staying at the lodge he is not to be spoken to. The reasoning of course is that he feels bad that he can not understand others and to spare the feelings of Charlie it would be easier if nobody talked to him at all.

Nice work—Froggy solved the problem, right? Well...maybe not. Since Charlie cannot understand any of them, everyone feels that it's okay to confide in him or talk about anything when he is in the room. Charlie winds up hearing more than he should.

What I found to be the interesting part of the play was the evolution of Charlie. Renner does an amazing transformation of character. Although Charlie had intended to be isolated while staying at the lodge, the opposite happened. He found that the others were very lonely and that he provided them company and since he could not speak he was also a good listener.

"I think that I am acquiring a personality...yes it is as if every person hands me a piece of it as they walk in the room," said Charlie, confiding in Froggy. "We're making one another complete and alive."

I would go to the play again to see the evolution of the characters. The characters in the play are very developed and it is obvious that there was a lot of time put into the production.



PHOTOS BY JENNY CHAVEZ / Clackamas



Top left: Staff Sgt. "Froggy" LeSueur (Erin Elizabeth Adkisson) shows Betty Meeks (Samantha Tennyson) a spoon. Top right: Emily Falkenstein as Catherine Simms. Bottom left: Jeff Miller as Owen Musser. Bottom center: Owen Musser (Jeff Miller) gets ready to pour pop on Charlie Baker (John Renner). Bottom right: John Renner puts on his makeup before the play.

## Show Times

Performances of "The Foreigner" are scheduled 8p.m. Nov. 16-18 and Nov. 30-Dec. 2nd and at 2:30p.m. on Nov. 19 and Dec 3rd in McLoughlin Hall Theater. Admission is \$7 for general, \$4 for students, and free for seniors with a reservation. For more information, call 503-657-6958 ext. 2356.

## Shadowing hands aid hearing impaired

### Theater and ASL joint efforts to include the deaf community

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*The Foreigner*, Clackamas' Theater Department's fall play, will be experimenting with a new way of sign language interpreting for the deaf community in the audience.

During the two Friday performances, second year American Sign Language students will be following the actors on stage, "shadowing" individual characters and signing the lines as the actors say them.

"We are not going to have them on the side you know, where you have to watch them or the action," said Director David Smith-English. "They're going to be [on stage] with the performers."

This joint project between the Theater and ASL has been in the works since last spring.

"We're trying different things," said Glenda Edwards, ASL instructor. "This is really an experiment between the theater department and the sign language class."

Edwards sits on the Board of the Northwest Theater of the Deaf. She approached Smith-English last year about the possibility of collaborating on projects together. Smith-English recognized the value of the idea for his actors as well as for the ASL students.

Both actors and signers agree that this experiment is challenging.

"It's kind of nerve-racking,

trying to translate all the signs," said ASL student Andelain Powell. "But once we got that down we were pretty comfortable on stage."

"It's kind of weird at first," agreed Jeff Miller, one of the actors. "All the sudden there's this extra person there."

But despite the challenges of working with so many people on stage and learning new vocabulary, everyone involved sees the experiment as a success.

"When it works right, it sort of makes the character richer," said Smith-English.

This collaboration, hopefully the first of many for the two groups, helps bring two worlds together at Clackamas that

might not otherwise meet.

"Most of us feel like we're part of the performance now," said ASL student Powell.

Edwards understands the importance of the play to her ASL students as a learning tool.

"Taking the script and changing it from English to ASL is really going to help them," she said. "If you study any foreign language, you know that if you don't use you lose it."

Besides being educational, "it's pretty fun" said Powell.

The two shadowed performances of *The Foreigner* will be Nov. 17 and Dec. 1.