

Closer: a raw look at life, love, lust and loss

DAISY BAIN

Staff Writer

Closer is a play that is provocative and private, yet put out into the public's eyes for all to see.

From the beginning, I was laughing at jokes that I never would have thought to hear at a play! I also saw images of people struggling to find love and sexual pleasure and realized how real it was for normal people to experience the same.

The play *Closer* centers on four people caught up in a circle of cheating and relationships. Everybody thinks they love one another only to find out the other person is better. This play shows to everyone, in a truthful and humorous way, that finding love is never easy and sometimes even down right painful.

As one scene demonstrates, a man notices a woman that is not his girlfriend. In an attempt to flirt with her, and embarrass her, he goes online pretending to be her. He then engages in a very sexual conversation with another man and talks this guy into meeting her at the zoo - where he knows she

will be. The guy shows up and notices this girl and makes a fool out of himself by talking as provocative as he thought she was talking online. But his plan backfired when the two of them actually start dating and fell in love. Or do they?

From then on the play takes the viewer on an emotional roller coaster that you can't turn away from for two reasons. One, it is so funny to watch from the outside looking in on the positions they



Elizabeth Reaser

put themselves in, and two, because it is so tragic that you know that it can all happen to you.

I think that at the end of the play you are left with the thought that for \$10 you left with a fun night that provided laughter, shock, and thought. What more could you get for \$10? If you don't believe me, go see it for yourself. I think you will love it.



Kevin Corstange

STEVE NIELSEN

News Editor

Patrick Marber's *Closer*, playing at Portland Center Stage wasn't as shocking as I thought it would be in spite of its sexually laden dialogue and situations. Instead, I found it a uniquely realistic, insightful and sometimes painfully revealing comment on modern life, love, lust, and loss.

Marber's play, set in London around 1995, traces the paths of four young professionals in their pursuit of love and companionship.

The characters: Larry the doctor, played by Daniel Freedom Stewart (son of Patrick Stewart), Anna the photographer, played by Deidrie Henry, Alice the stripper, played by Elizabeth Reaser, and Dan the obituary writer, played by Kevin Corstange, ebb and flow around each other in a rapid succession of loving and leaving, meeting and cheating. The scenes are superbly acted by this cast, whose performances are so passionate at times that you can see the spit fly. Mo-

ments of furious quarrels, poignant romance, and violent weeping were all powerfully and convincingly delivered.

Alice and Dan first meet when she steps in front of a cab. Dan meets Anna as she takes his picture for the cover of his new book about his then live-in Alice. He pursues Anna with the finesse of Hun, and in a fit of vengeance, for his spurned advances, he even poses as her in a chat room called "London Fuck".

Masquerading as Anna, he promises the unsuspecting Doctor Larry that he'll make "him cum like a train." The audience can read the dialogue on a big screen behind the set as the characters type it. He arranges a meeting in the aquarium where Anna regularly photographs people.

Throughout the action that is sometimes funny, mostly wrenchingly dark and at times

disturbingly familiar, the characters fumble their way in and out of their relationships struggling to deal with all their baggage. Though seen through the lens of the information age, the archetypal sex roles of the characters remain the same.

It's interesting to watch the characters as they present one image to their partners and another to those they pursue. At the same time, they try to discover their partner's truth and they hide their own. Sometimes they even deceive themselves. It seems the more they try to get the truth from their partners the more they push them away. In a futile attempt to get



Daniel Freedom Stewart

closer, they end up even further apart. At one point Dan asks, "What's so great about the truth?"

In the last scene, the characters finally have nothing more to hide. Still, after their relentless pursuit for truth, they neither discovered it, nor knew how much of it there was to know.

New romantic comedy shows for whom the wedding bells toll

MAGGIE JIRASEK

Feature Editor

Who makes sure your wedding day is the most glorious and memorable event in your life, as well as an idyllic, overwhelming and love-filled occasion? There is only one person who can make all your wedding dreams come true - the wedding planner. But what if the much-trusted planner and the groom fall in love and a showdown between love and logic begins?

The Wedding Planner, a Columbia Pictures and Intermedia Films presentation, is a mixture of old-fashioned romance and modern attitude showing us what can happen if

two people from different worlds meet and fall in love.

Adam Shankman, one of Hollywood's most successful choreographers, and producers Peter Abraham, Robert L. Levy, Jennifer Gibot and Debra Del Prete choose Jennifer Lopez and Matthew McConaughey to portray the two main characters, Mary Fiore and Steve Edison.

Mary Fiore (Jennifer Lopez) is

one of San Francisco's most prestigious wedding planners trying to make everyone else's dreams of love come true, but is too busy to have a love life of her own. One day, as Mary's Gucci shoe gets stuck in a manhole and she is threatened to be run over by a runaway dumpster,

marriage to Massimo Lanzetta (Justin Chambers), an energetic idiot who has just arrived from Sicily. On the surface, Mary and Steve know they shouldn't be together but love and destiny always find a way.

The Wedding Planner, a romantic comedy, is rated PG-13



Steve, played by Matthew McConaughey, meets Mary, Jennifer Lopez, after saving her from a runaway dumpster.

handsome Dr. Steve Edison (Matthew McConaughey) rescues her from the near-fatal collision. After spending a romantic evening with Steve, Mary believes she has finally found a reason to believe in love. Her life is thrown upside down as Mary discovers Steve is her client's fiancée. Just when Mary thinks it can't get any worse, her father Salvatore (Alex Rocco) pre-arranges her

and will open nationwide Jan. 26.

In case you think this is another one of those boring cheesy romance movies, you can look at it this way - you might get some inspiration on how to find your dream man, or dream woman. My conclusion was, I should stay near those manholes. I might get stuck and be rescued by the man of my dreams.

Award-winning poet to read on campus

MATT SHERPERT

Staff Writer

Author and teacher Colleen McElroy will visit the college campus on Thursday, Feb. 1 for poetry and fiction reading in the Skylight Dining Room.

McElroy is an award-winning author of fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Her works include: *A Long Way from St. Louis* - travel memoirs about a trip to St. Louis, *Traveling Music* - one of her eight poetry books, and her most recent book, *Over the Lip of the World: among the storytellers of Madagascar*.

McElroy was born in St. Louis, and by the time she was 21, had lived in Wyoming and Germany as well. Since then, she has done extensive travel in Europe, Asia and Africa.

According to McElroy, she developed a romance with language by listening to her grandmother's wind-up Victrola and went on to study in the Speech and Hearing program at the University of Pittsburgh. When she was in her 30s, she took up serious writing, drawing inspiration from

many poets including Joseph S. Cotter, Anne Spencer, Richard

Hugo, and Denis Levertov.

McElroy did her graduate work in neurological and language learning patterns, then became the director of speech and hearing services at Western Washington Univer-



Colleen McElroy will read from her poetry on Thursday, Feb. 1.

sity. She earned a Ph.D. in ethnolinguistic patterns of dialect differences and oral traditions from the same college, eventually becoming a professor of English.

She has received many grants, including two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, two Fulbright Fellowships, a Dupont Visiting Scholar Fellowship, a Rockefeller Fellowship and is the recipient of the American Book Award.

"I developed a romance with language by listening to grandmother's wind-up Victrola."

Colleen McElroy