

# 'Yesterday' starts tomorrow

**Katie Wilson**

Co-Editor-in-Chief

The world is full of dirty people.

Not unwashed people; they aren't special. I mean the people with filthy souls and tiny minds: people who make it into history books, Russian novels, t-shirts and, in this case, a play.

The Theatre Department will be performing Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday* this term.

One of the main characters is a crooked,

foul-mouthed scrap dealer named Harry Brock, who is taking advantage of World War II and making a bundle off of scrap metal. He buys off politicians without a second's thought.

"He's made money and a life by being a bully. Sound familiar?" asked Director David Smith-English. "Do things ever change?"

Artist-in-Residence Matt Morrison plays Brock.

"It's been fun to watch him take on the Harry Brock role – the character isn't like him at all," said Smith-English. "It hasn't come easily for him, but he's got it down now."

The two primary characters are Brock's mistress, Billie Dawn (played by Heather Ovalle), and an intrepid reporter trying to get the dirt on Brock, Paul Verrall (played by Mark Polendey).

Dawn is the stereotypical, dumb broad ... preferably blonde, but may her hair color be whatever the good Lord did intend it to be – the stereotypes exist for a reason.

"He's right. I'm stupid, and I like it," Dawn declares at one point.

But here's the problem, and the plot of the play:

Brock is trying to get in good with and buy off senators, congressmen, anyone, and there's Dawn, ruining his chances, reputation and sanity every time she opens her mouth. What's the Supreme Court? Dawn doesn't know.

Brock forms a plan. He hires Verrall to coach Dawn. She needs to learn how to talk, walk and act correctly. What he doesn't take into consideration is that she might learn how to think.

"She blossoms; she grows," said

Smith-English. "She figures out what's going on. She develops a moral compass."

The Theatre Department has never done a play like this before, according to Smith-English.

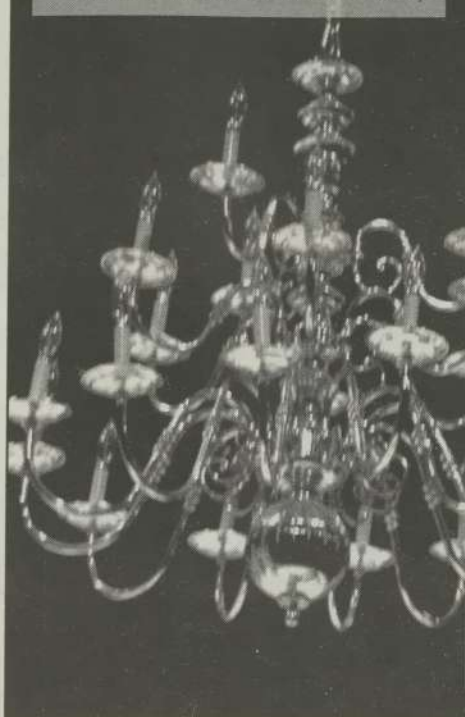
"The issues dealt with, the characters that are such identifying character types now," said Smith-English. "It's a classic."

And it's not just the characters that should interest the audience.

"The set is absolutely gorgeous," said Smith-English. "I think people will be stunned. And the costumes! I'd forgotten how interesting the clothes of that era are ... the hotel workers have wonderful costumes."

And in the end, "it's a comedy," he added. "Even with all these issues going on, it still is a comedy."

*Born Yesterday* will debut tomorrow at 7 p.m. Evening performances are scheduled through Sat., March 3, and next Thursday through Saturday (March 8 through 10) at 7 p.m. Matinees are scheduled for 2:30 p.m., March 4 and 11. General admission is \$10; seniors 62 and older, as well as students, are \$8. For more information, call 503-657-6958, ext. 2356.



All photos by Katie Wilson Clackamas Print



LEFT: Director David Smith-English (far left) oversees the setup in a scene with student actor Heather Ovalle (middle) and Matt Morrison (right), this year's artist-in-residence.

ABOVE: Mark Polendey plays reporter Paul Verrall in *Born Yesterday*.

## Student-directed one-act plays coming soon

**Jennifer Jenkins**

The Clackamas Print

The Theatre Department is giving students the opportunity to learn from each other by granting them complete creative liberty.

Department Head David Smith-English allows students to produce one-act plays that are generated entirely by the participants.

Smith-English offers the director's position to students who have demonstrated the necessary skills and ability in previous productions or classes. After they are chosen, advisor Cynthia Smith English is on hand for guidance and advice, but doesn't force her vision on the productions.

For the upcoming Winter Term Festival, there will be

two one-act plays. They are *Lysistrata*, directed by Mark Polendey, and *Perfect*, directed by Sarah Wilson. Both plays are comedies and run approximately 15 minutes.

Along with the plays, the standup comedy class will show off their newly-honed skills for the last part of the hour.

When asked what they have enjoyed most, participants in the one-acts made it clear that a director has a much different experience than an actor.

"Student actors being directed by other students can be difficult," said Kelly Miller, who stars in *Lysistrata*.

The advice Miller gave for future participants is to remember that the director is a student, too; it is crucial to view the whole process as a learning experience and get

past the hurdles egos can create.

Director Mark Polendey has seen the entire process as a course for self-improvement.

"Working as a director has improved my skills as an actor," said Polendey.

Polendey has seen both sides of the fence and can really appreciate what directing a play means. The experience has given him a better understanding of what a director wants from his performers.

For anyone considering auditioning for the Spring Term One-Act Festival, it's a great idea to go see this term's productions. Students can get a feel for what is being put on the stage.

Also, participants in any of the festivals receive course

credits. After the auditions, selected students register for a one-credit class that meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday for one hour between noon and 3 p.m., based on the cast rehearsal schedules.

For those who love theatre, but have busy schedules, it is a great way to earn Arts and Letter credits while being a part of something you enjoy.

Spring auditions will be posted soon, and no preparation is needed.

The Winter Term Festival will be held in McLoughlin Theatre on Tues., March 13 through Thurs., March 15 from noon to 1 p.m., with a 7 p.m. showing on Thurs., March 15. For more information, call 503-657-6958, ext.2356.

Attendees will receive a lunch-hour filled with comedy, and admission is free.