

# The Language of Theater

Lord Leebrick teams up with Latino arts group in bilingual theater project.

**W**ith a new \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and a dedicated group of organizers, Lord Leebrick Theatre is teaming up with La Casa de la Cultura and members of Eugene's Latino community to launch an innovative new program: bilingual theater.

Lord Leebrick Director Craig Willis recently got the news that the theater will receive the grant and said they'll be using the money over the next year and a half to start bilingual theater classes and to bring in a professional Latino theater company to perform at Lord Leebrick.

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*'En realidad, lo que quiero que aprendan a traves del teatro es el arte de la vida.'*  
- Manuel Carrillo

For Alberto Urquilla, president of La Casa de la Cultura, the partnership creates opportunities for the organization to bridge gaps within the Latino community and to help U.S.-born second-generation kids and their parents communicate better through theater. "What we see right now is our children growing up without any direction," he said. "What we're trying to do at the Casa with projects like painting and other arts programs like this one is to help them develop themselves and develop a better way of seeing the world. I see the same cycle over and over again, and mostly, they don't have a future. This will help open up many different roads for them."

Manuel Carrillo, who will be teaching the theater classes in the Lord Leebrick's Whiteaker rehearsal space, has other reasons for getting involved in the program. He

hopes that the classes, which are geared toward kids but are open to anyone from 8 years old and on, will help teach Latino kids and teens to have more confidence in themselves. He also wants to help parents who don't speak English better relate to their bilingual kids.

"In reality what I want them to learn through theater is the art of life," he said in Spanish. "This is a way to involve the whole

family. When we started this program, we were thinking about the need to unify families and through theater, we hope to help the kids connect more to their parents. We also want to show them they can have success. We want to motivate them not to drop out of school, to help them learn that education is important."

Carrillo added that it's not just a project for the Latino community but all of Eugene. "We need the support of the entire community and the invitation isn't just for Latinos. It's for anyone who's interested in the community and the culture."

The project is exciting for Erin Bucklew, who works with La Casa de la Cultura, but

she also expects some challenges. "We'll definitely have to ratchet things up a bit because they're a very professional theater group," she said.

So far, Bucklew said, Willis has been incredibly supportive and doesn't expect they'll have any problems. She said making sure the organization maintains its sense of purpose and continues to promote Latino culture and art is simply something she and the other organizers need to continually think about.

The classes officially started Friday, Jan. 7 but they're still accepting theater students as long as they have room. To register call 520-2313. **EW**

**THEATER** BY SHARLEEN NELSON

## The Classic and a Dramey

More great plays opening.

**I**n a month packed with fabulous theater offerings, two more great shows are slated to open next week. On tap Jan. 21 at the Cottage Theatre is *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Written by Ken Kesey in 1962 and adapted into a successful play by Dale Wasserman in 1974, Kesey's stint as an orderly at a veteran's hospital in Palo Alto, Calif., inspired the play.

The play's main character, Randle Patrick McMurphy, agrees to have his mental health assessed at an asylum rather than spend more time in jail. Rebellious and mischievous, McMurphy rallies his fellow patients against the institution's authority figures, particularly Nurse Ratched, as well as the severe rules enforced through the use of drugs, electrocution and lobotomy.

men are prisoners inside this mental institution," she said. "There'll be no warm fuzzy with the audience."

Also opening Jan 21 is the ACE Annex production of Lanford Wilson's *Fifth of July*, a poignant "dramey." The play focuses on a group of former student activists from the Vietnam era who reunite at an old farm in Lebanon, Mo., in 1977 to dispose of the cremated ashes of a member of the family. Over the course of 24 hours, each individual confronts old wounds, lost hopes, shattered dreams and buried resentments that bubble to the surface. With humor and hope, the reconciliation allows each to bury the past and move forward.

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**'It's a slice-of-life kind of play with remembrances and secrets revealed and a surprise at the end.'**


- Director Chris Pinto (*Fifth of July*)

Director Reva Kauffman, who previously directed *Cuckoo's Nest* in New York in 1980, said she won't add contemporary dialogue to update (and dilute) the original story. "My goal is to remain true to the author's work; make it as honest and believable as possible," she said.

Kauffman plans to create a unique setting to reflect the sterility and rigidity of a mental institution. "We want to build some sort of barrier separating the audience from the stage to illustrate that these

vealed and a surprise at the end," said director Chris Pinto, who draws parallels between the issues of Vietnam and today's war in Iraq. "The play deals with people coming back from war and the post-war consequences," he said. "To me, we're in a very similar era."

Pinto admires Wilson's skillful use of humor to convey often-devastating issues. "Lanford Wilson is brilliant at making light of everyone's demons through laughter, but if you can make people laugh, they still listen," Pinto said. **EW**



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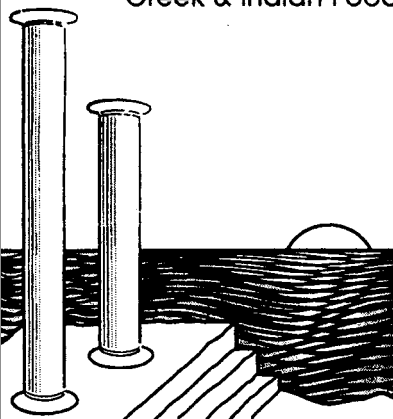
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