

# STANDING IN THE SPOTLIGHT

UO's New Voices features two emerging playwrights

The University of Oregon Theatre Program presents two student plays this weekend and next: *The Fruit Stand* by Sravya Tadepalli and *On the Street Where We Used to Live* by Cora Mills.

Both plays are winners of the *New Voices* playwriting competition. The UO's Joseph Gilg has shaken off retirement to direct.

"I may be retired, but I'm not over-the-hill," Gilg says. "I have always enjoyed directing plays — building something tangible from a story on a page, working with a creative group of people and being in the rehearsal hall during the moments of creation and inspiration. I think it is a large part of what keeps me young."

Gilg says there's something refreshing about these young playwrights' voices. "New plays are always special, I think. They are the lifeblood of the theater, after all," he says. "I find young people — all over the country — have things they want to say. And plays are often the medium they choose to express themselves."

The opportunity to be produced can help to develop the artists' craft. "Until a play is 'on its feet' — with roles inhabited by actors moving and interacting — it is just a piece of literature," Gilg says. "The chance to have a play performed is the final development of the piece for the playwright that can only be approximated by private or even public readings."

And Gilg says he's continually surprised by the creative process.

"I am always inspired by new plays. They are fresh and untouched, and the opportunity to dig into the new material and find the creative core, to nurture and develop that



raw emotional energy into a cohesive production, is very exciting," Gilg says.

For *New Voices*, Gilg explains, both playwrights observed rehearsals, listening and providing rewrites based on discoveries within the cast and crew.

"A lot of these additions and changes were the result of two writers who are not seasoned theater people observing the power of the spoken word by actors who are very

intuitive about the way people are and how they interact," he says.

For playwrights Tadepalli and Mills, seeing their writing fully realized will likely be an experience they won't soon forget.

*The UO presents New Voices at 8 pm Thursday through Saturday, March 9-18, and at 2 pm Sunday, March 19, in the Hope Theatre at the University of Oregon campus; \$8-10. Tickets at tickets.uoregon.edu*

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