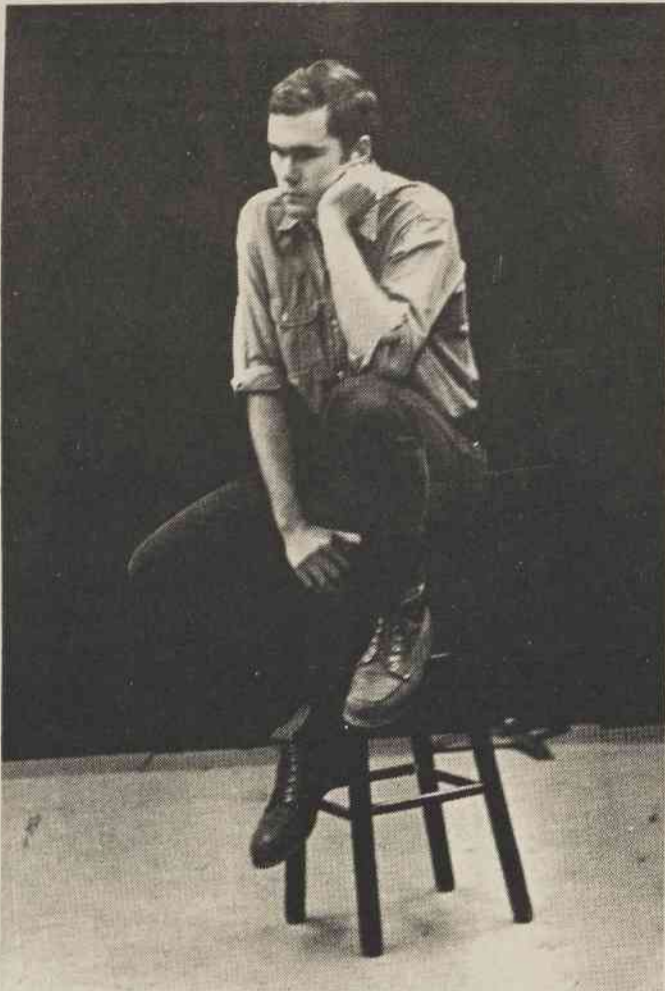


# A BILL OF ONE-ACTS

by Shirley Hildbrand

March 7-9, saw the Wesleyan College Theater in action again, as they christened their Experimental Theater. This time they presented "A Bill of One-acts," under student direction.

First on the bill was "Hello Out There," written by Saroyan and directed by our own Barbara Brown. Some very solitary music made the audience receptive to what would first meet their eyes. When the curtains opened, a young man (George Watson) sat on the floor of an abstract cell, thinking intently. That is perhaps the key to the total favorable impressions of this particular one-act: intensity. Barbara pulled out that intensity from her set design and from her central male character. George pulled it out of himself, put it into his character, and gave it to the audience. Under careful direction and with much practice, George Watson was able to involve his audience with him in what was happening. It seemed a shame, though, that the other could not get as involved in the play's action and main character as the audience did. When the young man died, I found myself shocked at the realization that I was actually more distraught at his death than the girl (Judy Johnson). I wish the young man could have uttered one last "Hello, out there" before he died. If he had, probably the whole audience would have answered, "Yes, we're here, and we all love you."

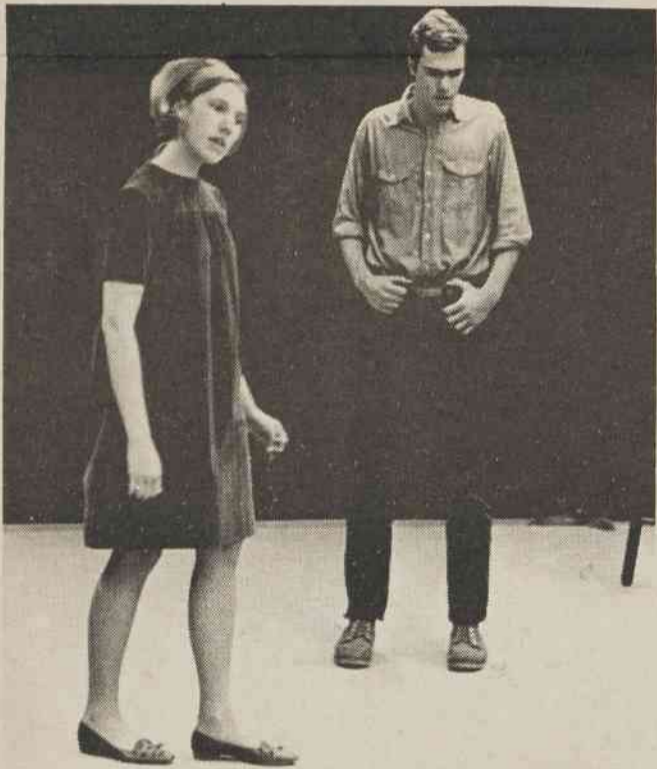


"... a young man sat in a abstract cell, thinking intently."



After a quick and efficient change of scenery, a new mood was set with what resembled caliope music. The curtain opened; "Not yet. We're not ready;" the curtain closed. A strange opening that was! But by now the audience knew that they could not know what to expect from Dr. Davis' "Thursday Friday Afternoon." As the play progressed, every movement or sound was made to seem both precise and absurd. The director, Bill French, certainly knew how to make his well-selected actors work together. The characters were shallow, on purpose. The relations between characters were shallow, on purpose. Perhaps, too, on purpose, the audience reacted to the play's situation with almost simultaneous laughter and crying. We laughed because of the play's apparent nonsense, but we cried because we knew the significance of "jello" and "Charleston" all too well. Maybe Davis and French ought to team up again soon on drama.

"Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen" showed us Tennessee Williams' impressions of the married life of what I'd call a representative Mr. and Mrs. Sounding Board. The man and woman in this play (Bryan Stearns and Eileen O'Grady) were the fullest characters we had seen all evening. They both were acting and reacting with each other; they seemed in complete control over anything that might happen on stage. Needless to say, those of us who have watched the acting careers of Bryan and Eileen, must have noticed how this play and Bill French's direction of it made them grow even more into real drama people. But then, who are the real drama people at Wesleyan? Usually they are more than we see, i.e., actors-plus. They must include former students, now teacher Gene Stowell, who was technical director for these one-acts. Certainly the student-directors Barbara Brown and Bill French are



Judy Johnson and George Watson star in "Hello Out There" directed by Barbara Brown



"Thursday Friday Afternoon"



Bill French Directs



Wesleyan college theater  
Presents  
"A Bill of One-acts"  
"Hello Out There" by William Saroyan  
"Thursday Friday Afternoon" by Dr. John Davis  
"Talk to Me Like the Rain and Let Me Listen" by Tennessee Williams  
thursday, friday, saturday march 7-9  
8:30 pm room 233  
tickets .50¢

crucially involved. Nann Brown designed most of the sets; Angie Powell became stage manager; Janet Town gathered props; Ann Douglas made sure costumes were right and ready; Ann Van Wagoner supervised the actors' make-up. These are some of the people now essential to Wesleyan's dramatic life. They make things work together, almost family style, in one of the most humanly creative ways. It is out of love for them that I have written this article, full of theater prejudice in their favor. After seeing how well their Once Upon a Mattress was received, I do not see how they could possibly give us a show they felt satisfied with, that we would not love. Besides, for \$.50, two beers could never produce anywhere near an equally stimulating effect to that of WCT's "A Bill of One-acts."