

Wesleyan to present musical 'Grease'

Grease, one of the most popular musicals of all time will be performed at the Dunn Center on the Wesleyan campus this fall.

Grease, a thrilling extravaganza of singing and dancing, made off-Broadway history in 1972. Made into a movie soon after, *Grease* remained popular for the next decade. Recently revived on Broadway where it starred Rosie O'Donnell and Brooke Shields, this musical is proving its timeless quality and the college and local community will be able to see it live on Wesleyan's campus.

Over 80 would-be singers, dancers, and actors showed up for auditions last week. Vaughn Schutz, director of the Theater, said that he believes this will be "by far the most exciting musical we've produced in years." Those who saw and were enchanted by *The Music Man*, directed by Vaughn Schutz last year will be excited to know that Schutz also added "*Grease* will definitely rival *Music Man* in quality."

The Dunn Center production is scheduled for presentation at 8 p.m., Oct. 23, 24, 25, 30 and 31. On Nov. 1 there will be two per-



formances, a matinee at 2 p.m. and an evening performance at 8 p.m.

The cast includes many Wesleyan students. Drew Davis is playing Danny, Sonya Tharrington takes the part of the beautiful Sandy, and Jen Morse, a senior this year, is playing Rizzo, the hard-headed aggressive leader of the Pink Ladies. Meegan Gray is playing the part of Marty, and freshman student Elizabeth Freeman is cast in the role of Patty the cheerleader.

Wesleyan's new Technical Director, Chris Johnson, will be responsible for set design and tech design, while alumni Charlotte Woleslagle will be Costumer for

both this and the spring semester productions. And, joining the folks from Wesleyan for the first time, Loretta Druen, a dance teacher from the Rocky Mount community, will be orchestrating the choreography.

Grease is just the first of the three productions planned for this academic year. In the spring both *Bus Stop* and *Arsenic and Old Lace* will be directed by Vaughn Schutz at the Dunn Center.

So, don't miss a musical highlight of the fall semester. Mark your calendars now for an evening of fun, laughter, and music.

Dunn Center Calendar

September

- 16 "Meet Mark Twain" (Special Non-Subscription Event)
- 18 Chamber of Commerce Education Forum, D. William Bennett

October

- 4 "1964..." The Tribute to the Beatles
- 23-25,30-31 "Bye, Bye, Birdie"*

November

- 1 "Bye, Bye, Birdie"*
- 8 The Boys Choir of Harlem
- 15 Tar River Orchestra & Chorus Opening Night
- 21 The Glenn Miller Orchestra

December

- 6 "A Christmas Carol," matinee & evening
- 11 Chamber of Commerce Education Forum, Ambassador Andrew Young

January

- 20 "The Hunchback Of Notre Dame"

February

- 7 Tar River Chorus performs Andrew Lloyd Webber
- 14 North Carolina Symphony Pops Concert
- 25-28 "Bus Stop"*

March

- 31 The Spencers "Theatre of Illusion"

April

- 15-18 "Arsenic & Old Lace"*
- 25 Tar River Orchestra & Chorus: Requiems, Mozart & Salieri
- 30 "Halley's Comet"

May

- 30 Tar River Orchestra & Chorus, Pops Concert at Bryanna

*Wesleyan Theatre Productions

'Quilters' put local audiences through hoops of imagination

By KEN KIPLEY

"Quilters," the opening production of the Playhouse Community Theatre's new season, came across as Broadway's compromise between the documentary style of Ken Burns and the episodic pageantry of the *Lost Colony*.

The Tony-nominated musical is a tribute to the women who settled the American West as well as to the art of quilting which they perfected. Based on the book, "The Quilters: Women and Domestic Art," the musical uses the stories and words of the women themselves to paint a mental picture of the joys and harshness of their lives on the American prairie.

Mixing dance and music, humor and drama, the characters of "Quilters" relate their stories to the squares of the quilts they are making. The 16 stories are "pieces of lives" woven into the fabric of the vivid finished quilt they assemble.

"Quilters," well directed by Jerry Sipp, was an unusual production, and unusually demanding of the audience's imagination. It definitely showcased the acting talent of its all-women ensemble cast as each of the seven actresses assumed more than a dozen roles to portray more than 100 characters during the two-hour production.

Loosely led by veteran Playhouse actress Susan Reese, as a narrator of sorts, the capable cast included Mary Frances Bush, Delinda Lee, Marsha Mills, Shannon Nicole Plummer, Wallyce Todd, and Deborah Matthews Whitley. They all held their own

Review

dramatically, and their voices blended well into many luscious harmonies throughout the broad mix of musical styles, backed by a wonderful orchestra led by music director Mark Pace.

David Blakely's provocative set was spareness and simplicity itself — a bare tilted wheel that revolved through the ages, changing moods through imaginative lighting and the creative use of simple props.

One of the best, most evocative images was the women's use of quilting hoops carefully arranged to suggest a covered wagon as they marched atop the revolving set. The production elements also effectively combined to suggest a huge prairie fire that fiercely consumes lives as well as dreams.

As a look at history, "Quilters" is reasonably effective in evoking the lives of pioneer women, with some of the more dramatic episodes echoing the brooding, intimate style of Ken Burns' "Civil War."

However, the same spare format of the musical that showed off the women's acting talent also created the dramatic weakness of the production. The audience was bombarded with so many characters, in such quick succession, that the episodes — variously funny and somber — began to march across the stage like Paul Green's outdoor pageants rather than draw the audience into a satisfying dramatic connection.

play that was an conceptual feast but an emotional hors d'oeuvre. Whether "Quilters" was a success or letdown depended more upon the expectations and imagination of the audience than upon the genuinely good performances on stage.

Still, "Quilters" was an ambitious and successful opening to what promises to be an exciting Playhouse season. The next production in November is the absolutely hilarious "The Teahouse of August Moon," followed by the annual Christmas Chorus, the popular musical "Annie," and the intense drama, "Twelve Angry Jurors." With this lineup, a season ticket is the best entertainment value in the area.

We're in for some great local theater this year.

(Season tickets are still available at the Playhouse Community Theatre in Rocky Mount. For more information and tickets, call 972-1266 weekdays from noon-4:30 p.m.)

Security everyone's job

(Continued from Previous Page)

rity will remain as it is. Like it or not, we are adults now (Well, most of us anyway) and should be responsible for our own and other's safety.

There is no excuse for violence, just as there is no excuse for letting just anyone into a residence hall or room. Think twice before you prop doors open. The visitor escort policy was implemented for a reason, and is well worth the students' time.

Strive for a safe and violence-free student community. It can be