

UNC themes reflected in PlayMakers show

Staff Reports
While UNC is on Spring Break, PlayMakers Repertory Company will launch its latest performance, "Some Americans Abroad," by Richard Nelson. Previews of the performance will run Wednesday through Friday, and opening night is March 13.

Written in 1989, "Some Americans Abroad" is a character study of a group of American academics as it travels on a theater tour through England. The contemporary circumstances of professors and their students may hit close to home on this college campus.

In the play, a group of American professors and students takes an annual theater tour in England, taking in dozens of plays and museums in a few weeks. Playwright Nelson uses the tour

as a backdrop to explore the politics of a college English department and the problems in the characters' lives back home.

The characters' wry humor fields issues such as denial of tenure, sexual harassment charges and marital infidelity in the lives of these New England college professors in temporary "exile." Again, the circumstances parallel many of those at UNC.

Guest director Evan Yionoulis, a Raleigh native who has directed productions both in New York and at regional theaters, guides this PlayMakers production.

The characters in "Some Americans Abroad" are fraught with shortcomings, Yionoulis said.

"These are faculty people who love

truth, beauty and culture and want to soak up as much as possible in a short time," she said. "But although they devour all this culture, nothing is digested. They can't glean anything that will be useful in their own lives."

The cast features three guest artists making their first appearances with PlayMakers: Derin Altay as Frankie Lewis, one of the faculty members on the tour; John Wylie as Orson Baldwin, former chairman of the English department; and Helen Harrelson as his wife, Harriet. Also appearing are Ray Dooley, Kristine Watt, Charles McIver, Donna Peters, Barbara Ellington, Carol Anderson and Andrew Sellon.

Although the characters believe they are familiar with England through visiting the country and reading about it,

they are ultimately outsiders.

"Because the characters in the play are 'exiles,' the distance from their everyday lives forces them to face the differences among the group they may have felt, but not dealt with, at home," Wylie said.

All performances are in the Paul Green Theatre. Performances will continue through April 4 and are at 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday with a matinee at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Admission is \$8 for Tuesday Community Nights (general admission). Other ticket prices are \$13.50 for previews; \$16.50 for Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays; \$19.50 for Fridays and Saturdays; and \$25 for opening night. For more information, call the box office at 962-PLAY.

Psychic

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ing about the candidates, he consistently has picked the right winners, including four victors out of a field of 27 candidates in a school board race.

He also predicted on a radio talk show that the Minnesota Twins and the Atlanta Braves would play in the 1991 World Series long before the baseball season began — he took a ribbing for it from the station's sports writers after the show.

In fact, Bliss prefers to know nothing about the subjects he is predicting. "The less you know the better," he said.

Last year, he correctly predicted Oscar wins for actor Anthony Hopkins and actress Jodie Foster and "The Silence of the Lambs" as best picture even though he hadn't seen the movie.

This year, he sees Al Pacino winning the award for best actor, Clint Eastwood for best director and "A Few Good Men" for best picture.

Bliss certainly is not afraid to go out on a limb. He already has picked the winners of the 1996 presidential race: Republicans Jack Kemp, former secretary of housing and urban development, and Texas Sen. Phil Gramm for president and vice president.

You mean Dan Quayle's out of it? "Dan Quayle's future is like my Mercedes," Bliss said. He paused, then explained, "I don't have a Mercedes."

Although Bliss predicted Clinton's win last November — though he voted for Bush — he said President Clinton would not win re-election in '96. In fact, Bill Clinton will not even get the Democratic nomination.

"The guy will be lucky if he's not impeached," said Bliss, who's placing his bets on New York Mayor Mario Cuomo and Nebraska Sen. Bob Kerrey for the Democratic ticket.

On campus, Bliss sees the free-standing black cultural center built on the Wilson-Dey site — the decision will be announced in the fall, he said.

Bliss also predicted that:

- Chancellor Paul Hardin will retire in four years and be replaced by current Provost Richard McCormick;
- Chapel Hill Town Council member Joe Herzenberg will not be recalled and booted out of office;
- Senior George Lynch will be picked in the first round of the NBA draft by the Houston Rockets; and
- The Phoenix Suns will upset the two-time defending champion Chicago Bulls in this year's NBA finals in six games.

Wheels

strategies. The older team is perfecting its four-corners offense to maintain its lead at the end of games, Leroy said.

The dynamics of the game changes slightly because it is played from wheelchairs. For example, players are allowed to push their chairs twice with the ball in their laps before they must dribble.

The basket height usually depends on who hosts the tournament. Sometimes the basket is lowered, but other

times it remains at 10 or 12 feet, requiring the players to use an impressive amount of upper-body strength.

Of course, team members also set aside time at practices to goof off. Chris Mackey, 14, said he was trying to learn how to do a wheelie.

Beth Huber, a former member of the UNC women's soccer team, coaches the 12-years-and-younger team. "These parents and kids appreciate my coach-

ing and just being able to be there," she said. "These kids don't take anything for granted."

Shawn, a self-proclaimed Duke basketball fan, said many people didn't realize how difficult it was for children in wheelchairs with others teasing them. "When I first heard about this team, I was really excited that I'd be able to show off my basketball skills."

In recent months, the team has shown off its skills at tournaments in Minneapolis and in Baltimore and is preparing for a national competition in Chicago.

Because the team is the only one of its kind in the state, its closest competition requires long-distance traveling, which can cost about \$350 per player.

Wheels of Steel has received some equipment and funding from Health Care Equipment in Durham and the Spina Bifida Association of North Carolina, but the group is still \$1,500 short of the necessary funds for its Chicago trip.

"I think we've opened a lot of eyes as

we've traveled around," said Joanne Mackey, president of the Wheels of Steel board of directors and coordinator of the Duke Myelodysplasia Clinic.

"The kids are very competitive and athletic and just like other kids," Mackey said. She hopes Wheels of Steel will hold an East Coast regional tournament in Chapel Hill next spring, then the national tournament in 1995.

"Every game I play, I learn something about the game of basketball and how to be a better player," Chris said. "As our team gets bigger, we have to learn to function on the court as a team."

Learning the game can be intimidating, especially for someone who has never participated in team play.

"When I first started, I was scared," Jonathan said. "But then I started to play, and I've just gotten better and better."

Shawn said learning to play had given him a lot of confidence. "I enjoy doing something I've never done before. (Playing on the team) gets better every year."

For the players, Wheels of Steel is a chance to defy the stereotype that being in a wheelchair makes one inactive.

"I like proving that I can do something when people say I can't," Shawn said. "Keep trying and never give up. You learn that the hard way when you're disabled."

"I hope to be doing this for a very long time."

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What is really bad is UNC has a better team than Duke," Bliss said sympathetically. Some "bad breaks" will keep UNC from rising to the top until next year, he said.

As for the Wake Forest game, Bliss predicted early Wednesday afternoon, "You're gonna cream 'em." (The score was 83-65, UNC.)

Bliss hesitated to say Duke would beat UNC because he has a firm rule against predicting negative news such as deaths and illnesses. He's a psychic with a conscience and warns people about questionable psychics. "I don't want to see (people) end up with Madame Dorothy," he said.

He also refuses to read the future for his friends. "I don't even read for myself or for my girlfriends," he said. "I have such a good rapport with my psy-

chic ability, I would probably tell me what I wanted to hear."

Raised in a metaphysical family, Bliss, whose mother is also a psychic, learned his skills from his grandfather. Bliss insists everyone is psychic.

"They're just not using their abilities," he said, suggesting people should go with their instincts unless it's something stupid. "People go with their hunches all the time."

Bliss criticized horoscopes and astrologers. "You can't get a good reading from an astrologer unless they are psychic," he said. "We have the ability to rise above our planetary influences. If you know you're going to have a low-energy day, put more energy in."

"The people you talk to who don't want to make predictions don't have balls."

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Campus Calendar

FRIDAY
9 p.m. WXYC 89.3 FM will play "Starry Eyes," the U.K. Pop compilation, disc two from the Rhino D.I.Y. series in its entirety tonight on the Inside Track.

SUNDAY
10 p.m. WXYC 89.3 FM will feature environments on Broken Music.

ITEMS OF INTEREST
International Relief Committee is working to help the people of Bosnia. If you want to become involved or learn about the situation, contact Adam at 914-3380.
Carolina Union Activities Board Social Committee is looking for participants for the Dating Game II. Applications are located at the Union desk.
Carolina Fever has applications for directorships available in Suite A of the Union.
UNITAS has applications for 1993-94 available at the Union desk.