

Lab!'s Latest Show Explores Southern Religion, Relations

BY ALISON MAXWELL
STAFF WRITER

Down-to-earth, realistic entertainment is the latest spirit to pervade Lab! Theatre in its upcoming production of "Holy Ghost." The play, which was written in 1971 by Romulus Linney, promises to be a true portrayal of people and society.

The story focuses on Nancy Shedman, played by Tracie Merrill, a woman who leaves her husband and takes all of his personal property and belongings with her. Her husband, Coleman, played by Mark Atrial, searches for his wife, only to find that she has joined a Pentecostal Holiness Church in a desperate attempt to find shelter from the problems in her life. He finds her at the church and stays for a service in the hope of getting a divorce.

According to director Holly Derr, a junior dramatic arts major, the play is set in the present in a N.C. town called Clyde.

"By setting the play in North Carolina I tried to bring in something that people can associate with," she said. The action spans one afternoon in one room of a church.

Derr, who previously directed Sam Shepard's "Back Bog Beast Bait," feels that "Holy Ghost" is unique because "it is a realistic portrayal of life with no glorification, just a real and necessary church."

Assistant director Carrie Treadwell says there is "no one in the cast to single out.... The characters are the best part of the

play." Derr agreed, "All characters come alive on stage with excellent character development."

Thematically, the characters illustrate one side of the economic and socially destitute. They signify the human need for acceptance and justification.

Freshman Mac Rogers, who portrays Obediah Buckhorn Sr., said, "It's about real life people who go to extremes. Everyone will recognize a part of themselves in the production."

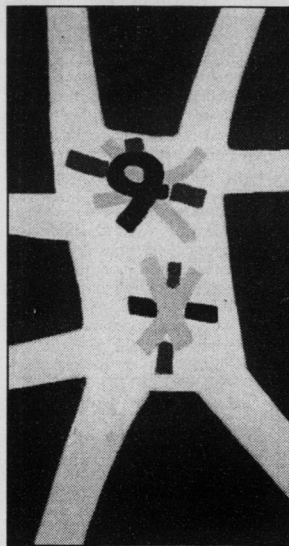
For the people in the congregation, who are the predominant members of the cast, the church is the highlight of their spiritual task. The characters seek sanctification through the Holy Spirit. "The zenith of their spiritual experience is actually the Holy Ghost," Derr said.

Michael Allen, producer of "Holy Ghost" and an actor in the play, says the production will be quite intriguing for the viewer. "The play is interesting because of its technical aspects," he said. "A lot of the action is very close to real life because this type of church is actually prominent."

Yet another striking attribute of the "Holy Ghost" performance is that it is a project of the Student Bicentennial Planning Committee which "seeks to spotlight the outstanding and diverse talents of UNC students."

Performances begin at 8 p.m. Saturday; other shows will be Sunday and Monday at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Tuesday at 5 p.m. All shows are held in the basement of Graham Memorial. Donations collected will be given to the Student Bicentennial Planning Committee.

Exhibit Traces Evolution of Abstract Master



Adolph Gottlieb's "White Figure," 1956, is one of the later works included in "Pictograph into Burst."

If Freud's psychological theories can be illustrated, Adolph Gottlieb's exhibit at the Ackland Art Museum is as close as it comes.

"Pictograph into Burst" is about the conscious mind versus the unconscious. It is about the rational versus the irrational. Gottlieb pits opposing forces of color and imagery against each other and achieves a striking balance. His paintings are enveloping and demand thought.

WAYNETTE GLADDEN

Art Exhibit
Ackland Art Museum
Through Nov. 28

Abstract expression requires some getting used to. Surprisingly, Gottlieb was trained as a realist in art such as still lifes of fruit baskets before he chose to become a modernist.

Gottlieb is a master. A first-generation abstract expressionist, he was born in New York in 1903. As a teenager, he studied at the Parsons School of Design. Unlike most poor artists of the 1920s, he also travelled and studied in Europe. At the time, artists generally lived hand-to-mouth and couldn't afford good paint. Unfortunately, some of the abstract expressionist work of this period, such as Mark Rothko's paintings, now is deteriorating as a result. Although some of Gottlieb's paintings are beginning to crack, his work survives and tells a story

of the struggling artist mastering his craft. "Pictograph into Burst" is unusual because the exhibit displays all of Gottlieb's styles sequentially from the "pictographs" to the "burst" series. His style evolved drastically between 1946 and 1956, a short time period for an artist's work to mature.

Annette Cox Wright, assistant director of the University program in the Humanities and Human Values, gave a lecture about the exhibit Sunday. "It's very rare to get an exhibit of abstract expressionism south of Washington, D.C.," she said.

She then explained the concepts behind and the transformation of Gottlieb's style beginning with the "pictographs" in 1946. "Pictograph" is a term used to describe the paintings and symbols found on cave walls. The first of this series is "The Couple." According to Wright, this painting was heavily influenced by surrealism, which had just become popular in the art world.

Surrealism is connected with Freud, Wright said. A major focus of the style is that truth can arise from the unconscious. "Artists began to experiment with new methods, such as allowing the hand to freely move across the page," she said. This resembles a kind of free association, albeit a painted rather than a spoken one.

"The Couple" is a collage of symbols and body parts drawn into a checkerboard

pattern or grid. It is a combination of abstraction and surrealism. The colors are gloomy gray, white and black. "Don't make the mistake of being too literal," Wright said. The painting is to be "read" but not as a story. It is intended to be fragmented like the unconscious mind, she said.

After "pictographs," the exhibit goes through the rest of Gottlieb's themes: "unstilled lifes," "labyrinths," "imaginary landscapes" and "burst." The most famous of these themes is the "burst" series. His most classic images are "burst" pictures in black, white and red.

"Ascent," an oil on linen "burst" picture, is an abstract masterpiece. The colors are soft, diffused earth tones characteristic of Gottlieb's later paintings. "Ascent" has two huge circular shapes that float over the canvas. A tension between the two parts does not interrupt the balanced whole.

The paintings created in the period between "The Couple" and "Ascent" are just as interesting and each have a story of their own. For people unfamiliar with modern art, there is a book at Ackland's front desk that describes each work.

Robert Hobbs of Virginia Commonwealth University will give a lecture, "Adolph Gottlieb and Abstract Expressionism," at 3 p.m. Sunday in Hanes Art Center Auditorium.

SECURITY

FROM PAGE 1

ment if they observe criminal activity. Also, they will wear insignias that differentiate them from sworn-in officers.

Pendergraph said the security guards would be trained in handling the public and also in how to conduct visual surveillance.

"We're going to take a look at the plan and see what else we would like these people do," he said. "We're not reducing the number of officers by any means but enhancing the total law-enforcement pres-

ence downtown."

Robert Woodruff, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Village Companies, said the grant was intended to give the town an option in strengthening law enforcement.

"It's a proactive response that will allow people to feel like they're doing something to help," said Woodruff, who also is a chamber of commerce member.

Council member Mark Chilton wouldn't comment directly about Snyder's letter, but said putting guards on the streets would send a message about the town's commitment to law enforcement. "The staff, mayor

and council are in agreement that this will bring the biggest bang for the buck," Chilton said. "It's like getting 90 percent police officer at half the cost."

But Snyder disagreed that hiring security guards was an effective solution.

"We may as well give citizens cellular phones to call 911," Snyder said. "It's over-redundant to put eyes somewhere where citizens are already looking."

He said sworn officers still would be tied up with nonemergency calls so the response time would not decrease. "A security guard's call for assistance will be prioritized just like a citizen's, hopefully, and an officer that is unavailable for a citizen's call will be just as unavailable for a security guard's call," Snyder wrote in his letter.

Snyder suggested training civilians to handle nonemergency calls so that police

officers would be free to handle emergencies and increase their presence downtown.

"I'm very happy that Village Companies donated the money, but I think we need to take a hard look at how we spend it," Snyder said.

Rosemary Waldorf, chairwoman of the Law Enforcement and Support Committee, said she shared some of Snyder's concerns. "This program is not a piece of cake, but it has the potential to help downtown," said Waldorf, who is also a candidate for town council. "I think that there's a very good chance that having these spotters downtown will provide some deterrent."

Pendergraph said that although the plan still was in the works, he thought it could be successful. "Our initial evaluation of the program is that I feel comfortable with the effectiveness of the squad."

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