

Dinner theatre flawed but refreshing

by Bruce Mann
Assistant Feature Editor

While onstage the temperature currently soars to a searing "110 in the Shade" at Raleigh's Village Dinner Theatre, offstage, theatregoers discover that the dramatic climate of this endearing, engaging, stylistically flawed but entertainingly western Tom Jones-Harvey Schmidt musical comedy is closer to comfortable refreshment.

Though, unfortunately, this production is not an oasis of perfection — its musical style is definitely hampered by non-sparking piano accompaniment and its theme (a homely girl learning to let her hair down) is a dramatic perennial — there are still enough exciting evocations of life circa 1930 on the parched Oklahoma panhandle in the song-and-dance routines; enough of that same Tom Jones-Harvey Schmidt magic (the duo composed the enchanting classic, "The Fantasticks") in the book, music, and lyrics; and enough star power in the stellar acting of Jay Hugueley and Katy Nance to make "110 in the Shade" one of the most ambitious and

impressive dinner theatre entertainments ever attempted.

The simple story, set amidst a drying drought on the range, surrounds Lizzie Curry (Katy Nance), a plain Jane who, in her lack of beauty and ugliness, survives by living off "simple little dreams" which will never come true. Her father, H.C. Curry (Ted Urban), a type of Pa Cartwright-character; her older brother, Noah (Larry Drake), a martinet cowherd who rules the ranch and family with an authoritarian grip; and her younger brother, Jimmy (Don Klecak), an imaginative devil-may-care who "can see magic in a hickory stick" all worry about Lizzie's old maid status and her attitude toward it ("You're afraid to be beautiful," accuses the father), and they try to interest young Sheriff File (Brad Hartwyck) in Lizzie's charms, to no avail, since File is reluctant and Lizzie remains isolated, insistently believing that "you gotta hide what you are."

Meanwhile, arid heat scorches the farm, and crusty tumbleweeds grow crisper as the temperature rises, creating a desperate situation since the Curry cattle are beginning to die off. Suddenly, an evangelistic thunderbolt of energy,

Bill Starbuck (Jay Hugueley), the rainmaker, dressed in a spangled red shirt, streaks to the Curry's assistance, promising rain in 24 hours ("stomping across the sky will be a herd of white buffalo").

With sermonizing zeal, Starbuck sets the family to work, preparing for the rainmaking ritual, while he becomes enraptured in the personality of Lizzie, trying to show her the power of belief — how even she can be beautiful through that same intensely personal fervent faith with which he can even produce rain.

In certain ways, "110 in the Shade" is similar to "The Fantasticks" in that Jones and Schmidt couple a growing, maturing experience with a natural phenomenon, attempting to realize the link through an integration of intimate, tender music, bits of humor, and serious scenes of conflict on an imaginative, limited-prop theatre in the round. But, unfortunately, the attempt is not as precisely executed and the comedy remains mostly slapstick (except for that "honey, baby, sugar-darling" sweetheart, Snookie, a charming little peach who humorously weaves through the plot trying to hook Jimmy Curry).

This means of course, that the music must carry the powerful dramatic load, and in most cases the score is happily equal to the task, ranging from the footstomping "Lizzie's Coming Home" to the ragtime, honky-tonking showstopper, "I'm a Raunchy Kind of a Girl," sung by an affected and effective Lizzie. Also comedic ensembles like "Come on Out," delivered by the coaxing Curry boys to cautious Sheriff File, are purely charming, and other songs, like the minor-mode, surging "It's Gonna Rain" and the poignant duet, "A Man and a Woman," serve a much greater purpose than just setting the mood.

Director Jay Hugueley paces his three act show moderately and keeps his superb cast hopping and dancing throughout the theatre — in the aisles, up stairs, and all over the sparsely decorated stage platform itself.

Hugueley himself even stars as swaggering Starbuck, the boastful, arrogant, money-grabbing charlatan whose vivid raconteur-imagination (at one point Starbuck concocts the story of "Melisande" by taking various folk legends and historical characters — "King Hamlet," "Golden Fleece," "Socrates," "Plato" — and binding them

into a narrative) eventually endears him to the audience.

As Lizzie, Katy Nance is very talented, convincingly capable whether coquettishly sashaying or simply feeling sorry for her sad state ("Love, don't pass me by," she sings), but often she injures the play's intimacy by flaring uncomfortably at the top of her vocal range when her pleasant pianissimo is all that's necessary.

The rest of the cast proves perfectly able with solid enthusiasm in all roles, especially Edie Kramer as the gum-chewing, hip-wiggling temptation, Snookie.

With a delectable buffet banquet of roast beef and summer salads and ambitious musical dinner theatre, you will assuredly find it dramatically, comedically, and musically profitable despite the show's slight imperfection, to come out of the sun to where it's "110 in the Shade" at the Village Dinner Theatre.

The Theatre is located off US-70 just before the airport exit. Discounts, for those who wish to witness only the musical without attending dinner, are available.

"110 in the Shade" runs through September 19th.

At Planetarium

Course explains stars

The Morehead Planetarium, called "the most modern and best equipped facility of its kind in the world," will expand its programs this fall to include an all-family course in popular astronomy, "Constellations and Legends," open to persons of all ages, regardless of scientific knowledge.

According to Richard S. Knapp, Assistant Director of the Planetarium and teacher of the new course, "all it takes to enjoy and benefit from this kind of astronomy is a little curiosity about the sky and a touch of personal imagination." Knapp, who has taught the constellations and celestial recognition to

America's astronauts since joining the Planetarium staff in 1965, hopes "to share with the class the fun and pleasure of casual sky-gazing."

Using the Morehead Planetarium's new Carl Zeiss Model VI Projector (installed in early 1969), "Constellations and Legends" will try to familiarize class members with the constellations and their star stories.

Meeting six times from 6:45 to 7:45 every Thursday starting September 2, the class will advance from indoor study and observation to outdoor viewing with a "star party" held under nature's own instead of under the Planetarium's star chamber at the conclusion of the course.

Registration will begin at the Planetarium at 6:30 p.m. on the opening night of the course, or may be done in advance 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at the Planetarium.

Fees are \$7.50 for adults, \$6.00 for students in grades 7 through college, and \$4.50 for children in elementary school.

While no text is required, a star map is recommended and may be picked up at the Planetarium anytime.

Flick times changed

The late night free flick is gone. Beginning this weekend with "Sahara," a Humphrey Bogart war drama, the free flicks will be shown on Friday and Saturday at 4 p.m., 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. in the Great Hall. Sunday and Festival movies will be shown at 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Ticket sales begin Monday for this semester's Super Sunday series, six special attractions which are shown on different Sundays through the semester.

Super Sunday movies this year are

"Goodbye Mr. Chips," "Bob, Carol, Ted, and Alice," "MASH," "Anne of a Thousand Days," "Diary of a Mad Housewife," and "Midnight Cowboy."

Tickets are \$3 for the entire series. "Sahara," which runs Friday night, is the story of the "Lulabelle," an army tank lumbering across the desert after the fall of Tobruk.

Saturday night is "The Ipcress File." Sunday night is "Teorema," starring Terence Stamp and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

\$124.95 seems like a small price to pay for a 15-inch diagonal RCA Portable TV.



The TOWNSMAN Model AZ 151 15" diagonal picture

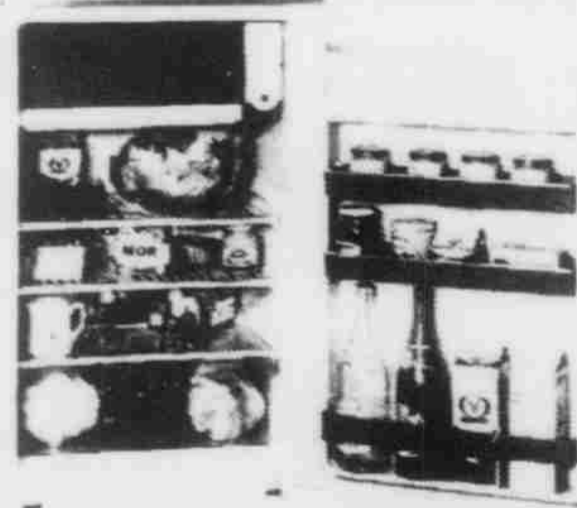
And it is. But we feel you should be able to buy quality in any size package at a price that won't take the fun out of it. (P.S. we have lots of other RCA bargains too. Come see for yourself.)

We rent TV's for \$10 per month.

EASTGATE TELEVISION & APPLIANCE CENTER

Eastgate Shopping Center
9-6 Monday - Saturday, 'til 9 Friday

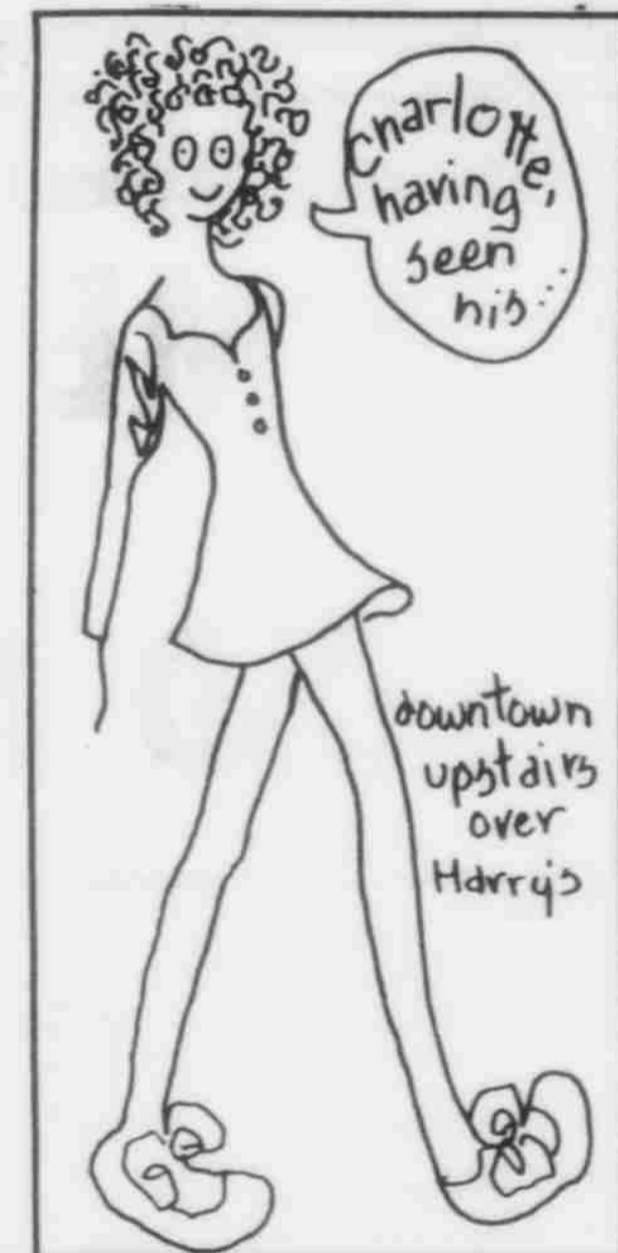
Amana® Compact Refrigerator



5 cu. ft. Reg. \$119.00
Discount Price \$97.00

(Students only we deliver)

BOULEVARD APPLIANCES
3950 Western Boulevard
(Next To Continental Rest.)
Ral. N.C.
832-2100 833-2453



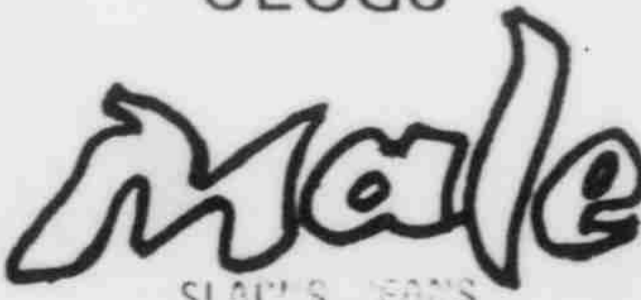
CHAPEL HILL'S REASONABLY PRICED CLOTHING STORE FOR GUYS AND GALS



the thread mill

412 W. FRANKLIN ST.
easy to find
worth finding!

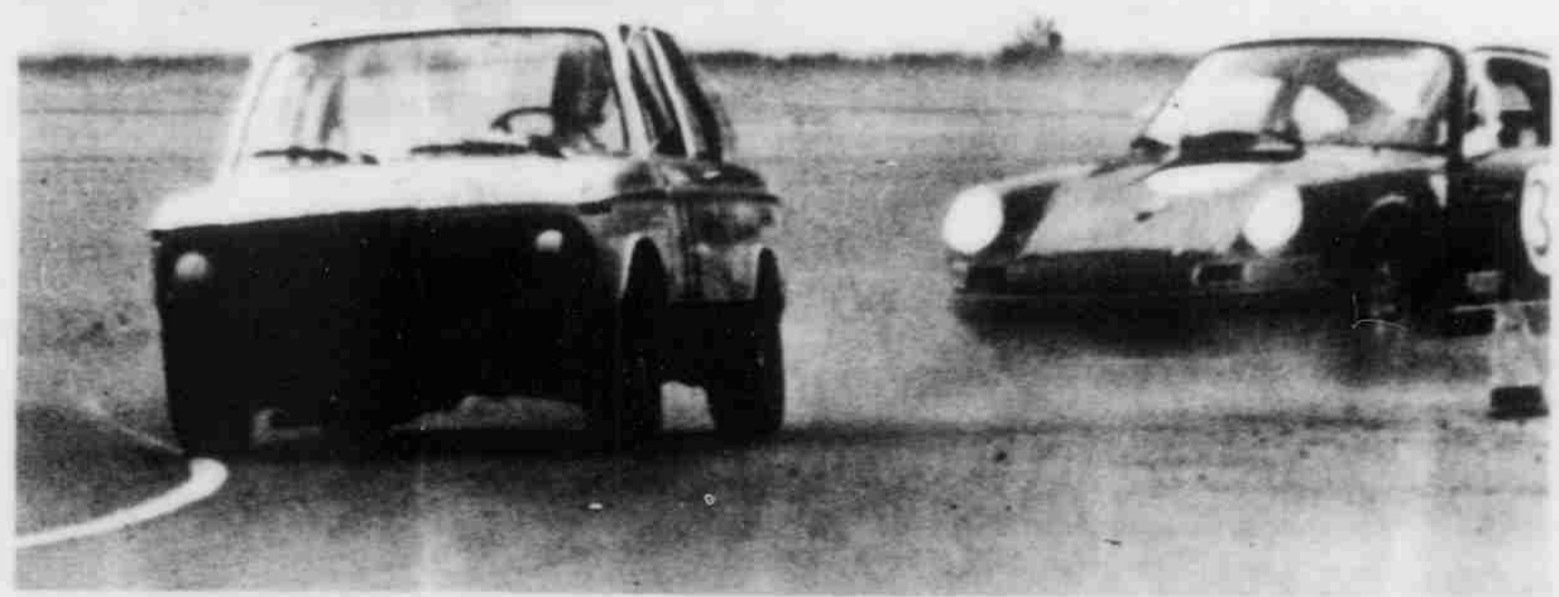
- featuring
- JEANS
- TOPS
- INDIAN DRESSES
- MILITARY SURPLUS
- BELTS
- CLOGS



MALE'S JEANS THE GUYS STAY IN THE SADDLE

Male is a registered trademark of the H-K Corporation Atlanta, Georgia

Register for Free Waterbed Drawing Held September 15



Racing is our business - or is it?

This is a picture taken from "Road and Track" and "Car and Driver" magazines. The BMW is driven by Byron Morris. It is owned and prepared by Import Maintenance Company, racing division. IMCO works on all foreign cars. Not to make them racing cars, but to be an outlet of dependable automobile servicing. Consult your Durham directory Yellow pages.