

Refunds to be given for canceled concert

To the dismay of many devoted Stray Cats fans, the band has canceled their scheduled Feb. 16 concert at UNC. Many tickets had already been sold to the concert, according to Linda Wright, assistant director of the Carolina Union. "We had sold almost 250 tickets at our box office," Wright said.

But those who have already purchased their tickets in hopes of seeing the canceled concert may receive a re-

fund for their worthless tickets.

According to Wright, the Union will begin giving refunds today from noon until 6. The Union will be giving refunds only to persons who bought their tickets at the Union. Those who purchased their tickets at other outlets will have to contact those places for refund information.

The Union will be giving refunds until March 6.

Good times and humor characterize 'The Hostage'

By SHERYL THOMAS
Assistant Arts Editor

The UNC department of dramatic art will present Brendan Behan's musical play *The Hostage* through Sunday and Feb 7-12 at 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m. in Paul Green Theatre.

The Hostage, originally written in Gaelic, tells the story of a British soldier held as a hostage by the Irish Republican Army as a reprisal against an Irish youth's being held by the English. The British soldier, Leslie (played by Michael Cumpsty), is being held in a very unusual place—a brothel—among a very motley crew.

Tree O'Halloran, who will be the stage manager for *The Hostage*, talked on *The Hostage* set about the show itself and her duties as stage manager.

O'Halloran, a junior dramatic art major, described her job as making sure everything gets done as smoothly

as possible. "I am the link between tech and art," she said. "I also do the scheduling for all rehearsals, take notes, write cues, and supervise the sound, lights, and actors." On the lighter side of things, O'Halloran said she must also make sure there is light in the actors' dressing rooms and enough coffee to make it through the night.

After all the production work, *The Hostage* finally goes into performance this evening. "It's a fun play," O'Halloran said, "set in a brothel filled with crazies."

The "crazies" who inhabit this brothel run the gamut of characters. There is Pat (played by John Tyson) and his wife, Meg (played by Wendy Wilson), who run the brothel. O'Halloran described Pat and Meg as "the stabilizers of the bunch."

Also inhabiting this den of disrepute is an "eccentric, Irish patriot," affectionately called "Monsewer," played by Michael Connolly. "He still thinks that the oc-

cupants are still fighting for independence," O'Halloran said. "So Pat and Meg humor him with house inspections and food for the 'troops.'"

Despite the humor, serious undercurrents influence *The Hostage*. "The discussion (in the brothel) is very critical of the new IRA," O'Halloran said. "They talk about the glory of the wars against the English versus the new terrorism. It makes a political comment on both the IRA and the British, saying a hostage in England as well as one in Belfast is wrong."

But good times still dominate the scenario. "It is a musical," O'Halloran said. "The characters break into song and dance at strange moments."

To set the musical mood, there will be a musical sing-along beginning about 30 minutes before the show starts.

O'Halloran promises an "exciting climax" to the show. "Cues 70 and on show lots of special effects in the last act—but you'll really have to wait and see them!"

'Dining' a tribute to fading WASPs

By STEVE MURRAY
Staff Writer

In *The Dining Room*, a play by A.R. Gurney Jr. being presented by the Actors Co-op of the Art School, a dining table dominates the center of the stage, as solid as a Druidic altar stone.

Like an altar, the table is the focus of rituals, annual feasts, prayers and feuds. It is the foundation of a culture—specifically Northeastern establishment WASPs. And the WASPs, like the Druids, are a passing society whose disintegration is detailed with humor and melodrama in Gurney's comedy.

In two acts, 10 actors portray 54 characters in scenes that range from brief comic flourishes to longer sketches peppered with melancholy.

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A senile old woman, not recognizing her own children at Thanksgiving, insists on being driven to her long-demolished home. Extramarital lovers meet over the din of a child's birthday party. Two gossiping schoolgirls thrill to an illicit mix of vodka, gin and Fresca. And Great-aunt Harriet, showing off her china and finger bowls, finds out that her nephew's interest is academic: she's the subject of his anthropology project, a study of the vanishing WASP ethic.

There are many other scenes, the common denominator being the setting. Weaving through the play's episodic structure, each cast member handles from three to seven different roles. It's a great chance to demonstrate acting range.

Most adventurous is Tom Marriott, who endows each of his characters with uniqueness. He sneaks into his parts so well that it's hard to recognize him from scene to scene. He rings hilariously true as a rubber-faced kid at a birthday party. But he's just as believable playing a hard-drinking father coming to terms with his daughter's wrecked marriage.

In that scene the daughter is played by Elizabeth Shoemaker. Shoemaker's characterizations are also rich, but not as wide. Her acting is precise, with a bird-like delicacy recalling Meryl Streep's style. But beneath her placid exterior comes the hint of a fiery repression burning away the very legs of the dining room table. It's a shame more of this doesn't come out in her performance.

Another fine actress is Carolyn Rashti, who improved tremendously Friday night from the first scene, in which the clattering of her own high heels overwhelmed her voice. She plays arthritic servants and

a palsied dowager grandmother so well that it is a surprise to see her moving freely for the curtain call.

Sharon Pigott, a striking redhead, holds the stage with the assurance of Lady Macbeth. But her characters all seem the same, slightly peevish and emotionally insulated. Likewise, Stevens H. Clarke is first a stolid father, then a stolid psychiatrist, next a stolid carpenter, and so on. He's too reserved.

In contrast is Alfred Dolge, who is made to look ingratiatingly sleazy. In his big scene as a man whose brother has been insulted, he rants (feverishly, nasally and with flailing arms) about virtue, honor and integrity. It's a crowd-pleasing act, but it juts out from the rest of the play like a cream pie hurled into Hamlet's face. It's too broadly played for an otherwise moderate comedy.

Also excessive is Bob Lehnberg, who seems uncomfortable. He tries too hard, like a toy soldier wound up too tight. If he eased up a little he would be much better.

Of the remaining cast, Susan I. Campbell, Angela F. Cason, and Jon David Jordan are all fine. The ensemble work is strong.

Director Sam Crawford deserves applause. The pace of the production is smooth, transitions are seamless, and the acting is full of nice details. The only weakness is in the play itself.

By skimming among 54 characters, isolating both their buoyant peaks of fun and their nuggets of tragedy, playwright Gurney tries to trigger shocks of recognition in each audience member. The result is like a *Reader's Digest* approach to drama. *The Dining Room* never engages audience sympathy the way a traditional play, with a smaller cast and a single linear plotline, can. It doesn't pierce the heart; it just pokes around.

Also, inherent in the material itself, an unsavory sense of clannishness flavors the play. Gurney defeats the purpose of his tribute to the fading establishment WASPs. Considering the bluster, confusion, and psychological warfare he focuses around the dining table, the decline of the table's significance seems cause not for mourning, but for a great sigh of relief.

The Dining Room will be performed at 8 p.m. at the Carr Mill Art School through Saturday. For ticket information, call 929-2896.

'Silkwood' lacks conviction; Streep versatile

By STEVE CARR
Staff Writer

The best scene in *Silkwood* comes toward the end of the movie. The officials at the plutonium plant where Karen Silkwood works find out that she is internally contaminated. They send an army of nondescript, space-suited figures to check for radiation in her home.

The figures come barging in. They take all the furniture. They peel off all the wallpaper. They put plastic bags on everything, including pictures of Silkwood's children. The pictures, along with other small items, are then thrown into what looks like a trash can.

Review

The scene registers its impact and rattles every homeowner's sensibilities. It plays upon the suburban resident's fear of being totally stripped of identity by an omnipotent-corporation.

Unfortunately, this five- or 10-minute *tour de force* is like an island in an otherwise bland and somewhat contrived eulogy for the real-life anti-nuclear heroine.

What *Silkwood* really lacks is dramatic bite. The telling of the story is extremely straightforward—Karen Silkwood is, at first, just another fun-loving worker at

the plant; she becomes a better person by embracing a cause.

The film portrays its characters in a somewhat superficial manner. They are simple folk who just want to hang on to their jobs. Except for one or two scenes, the menacing, frightening aspects of both the story and people are never properly brought out.

Meryl Streep does a fine job in the title role. Part of the reason she is so impressive, however, is because of her previous performance in *Sophie's Choice*. Many actresses could have played Karen Silkwood, but very few could have played her after starring as a Polish immigrant. The part is not all that demanding, but it is a showcase for Streep's versatility.

As her good ole boyfriend, Kurt Russell gives a characterization that is just a little bland, but he adequately portrays a simple man who can't understand why his lover wants to make all this trouble.

The nicest surprise about *Silkwood*, however, is Cher. She plays Silkwood's roommate, Dolly Pelliker, with a kind of twang in her voice that endears the character and doesn't mock her.

There are some very nice supporting roles as well, including Craig T. Nelson (from *Poltergeist*) and Diana Scarwid as a mortician who is also Dolly's lesbian lover. Tess Harper even has a bit part as the wife of Silkwood's

ex-husband. Harper played opposite Robert Duvall in *Tender Mercies*.

Mike Nichols' direction is the last word in understatement. The main problem, though, lies in Nora Ephron's and Alice Arlen's script. While there is definite conviction from the actors, the film itself purports to be a character study, yet ultimately reveals nothing about the characters.

Silkwood tries self-consciously not to put the blame on any one character or organization. But in trying to blur what was really the truth, the film also blurs its characters. What makes Karen Silkwood become an activist? Is she just scared, or is this part of her awakening self-awareness as a woman? What about Dolly Pelliker? Does she love Silkwood as a friend or as a potential lover? All of these questions are raised but never discussed.

Silkwood can't decide whether to be a character study of a woman who decides to do something about the very lax nuclear plant where she works or to be a scathing expose of how the "little people" are manipulated by "the system."

Silkwood draws from both *Norma Rae* and *The China Syndrome* but lacks the conviction of those films. The result is a very indifferent film that leaves a very indifferent aftertaste.

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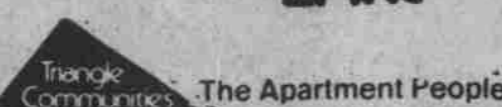
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