

Existential play has satiric flavor

By MARK DAVIS
Staff Writer

"Nothing is created out of nothing." So states the theme of *Waiting For Godot*, a play being presented by Transactor's Theater Company starting tonight at the ArtSchool. The company is a resident affiliate of ArtSchool, Center for Visual and Performing Arts, and the play is about — nothing. Confused? Go see the play.

"Its subtitle is a 'tragicomedy.'" says director Mary Ruth. "But we're emphasizing the comedy. The play's inherently funny."

So what's it about, you ask. Well...it's not about anything, really. Well, OK, there are these two tramps, right? Vladimir and Estragon. And they spend two days waiting to see Godot. Who's Godot? We don't know. Each day their vigil is interrupted by Pozzo, the landlord, with his slave, Lucky, on a leash, and by Godot's child messenger who comes out each day to say that his master won't arrive until tomorrow. Where is Godot? We don't know. Why are the tramps waiting to see him? We don't know. What do we know? Let us get back to you on that.

Waiting For Godot was written by Samuel Beckett and was first presented in Paris in 1953. Since then it's become a modern classic, puzzling and delighting audiences for 30 years. Despite the critical acclaim it's received, no one has been able to tag the play with a description that fits it. As a result, it's been called everything from a theatrical Rorschach test designed to reflect the viewer's personality to a Christian play. Confused? Go see the play.

"It's about the human condition," explains Mark J. Miller, who plays Vladimir. "Everyone waits for something in life, and we're waiting for Godot."

Waiting For Godot is very much a director's play. Its vague and unstructured foundation can be brought to the stage in many different ways. Despite

its existentialist nature, Ruth chose to accent the comedy, feeling its satiric flavor perfectly captured the humor of the existentialist way of life.

"I don't think audiences will find the ideas tragic anymore," says Ruth. "It was revolutionary when it first came out, but I don't think people of today will find it that different."

Ruth also broke tradition by placing two women in the previously all-male cast, a change that neither she nor Miller feels compromises the integrity of the script.

"I used two women and two men because they were the best actors I could find," Ruth says simply.

"I think it's been wonderful," echoes Miller. "Using women has given us as much dimension, maybe more, than if we'd just used men."

Waiting For Godot has been a favorite of English professors for years, and many other plays have used it as their springboard. One of its main attributes is its loose, uninhibited format. It doesn't attach itself to any specific time or place; therefore, it's not dated. It's universal, a seemingly simple story that deals with nothing that's in reality a complex peek at man's resilience and resourcefulness when faced with unrealistic expectations.

As you may have guessed by now, *Waiting For Godot* is not your average play. It's a funny/serious thought-provoking work about... well, about nothing. "You'll be sorry if you miss it," warns Miller. Confused? Go see the play.

Waiting for Godot will be performed by Transactor's Theater Company at 8 p.m. Oct. 17, 18, 19, 24, 25 and 26, at ArtSchool. Call 929-2896 for ticket information.

How you live may save your life.

Playing to a packed house

By ELIZABETH ELLEN
Arts Editor

Last week was a landmark period for drama groups on campus. With sell-out crowds at productions by PlayMakers Repertory Company, the department of dramatic art and UNC Lab Theater, the total audience was over 4,100 people.

"This was a record for our departmental programs," said Milly Barranger, chairwoman of the department of dramatic art and executive producer of PlayMakers. "We had three theaters operating at the same time to capacity audiences."

An *Evening of Tennessee Williams* performed by the department drew 1,800 people in five regularly scheduled performances and a special encore performance Sunday night. "Tennessee Williams is a very popular playwright," said Sharon Herr, audience development coordinator for PRC.

The Lab Theater Productions *The Idiot Box* and *Altered Mates* were performed in the Graham Memorial Hall, a tiny, intimate theatre. People were turned away, according to Herr. "This audience reaction is a carry-over from last year," she said.

She Stoops to Conquer by PRC filled Paul Green Theater Thursday and Sunday nights and nearly filled it the rest of the weekend. Herr credited the *She Stoops* sell-outs to word of mouth and very positive reviews.

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Some stress said to help students

By LAURIE RODGERS
Staff Writer

Students struggling through the mid-term crunch or final exams often feel overworked. Those who constantly feel overburdened may be victims of student stress.

Student stress is a physical or mental tension resulting from lack of time, rest and a healthy environment. If students fail to deal with stress, it can become a major problem and result in poor performance.

"Some stress is healthy because it motivates students to actualize and reach for their greatest capabilities," said Dr. Denise R. Barnes, assistant professor of psychology at UNC. "Stress is a part of growing up and learning how to meet challenges."

Stress can teach students to see the world differently and learn to cope with different situations, Barnes said. To relieve stress, she emphasized, students must meet the physiological needs of sleep, exercise and proper foods.

Also, students must recognize if they are stress seekers. A student may seek stress by procrastinating, for example.

The New Well Center at Student Health offers several programs to help students cope with stress. These include counseling to teach correct nutrition, stress management techniques and test-taking strategies.

The Student Health mental health section provides one-on-one counseling to alleviate simple stress problems. To physically relieve stress, massage workshops are available.

Health Education offers programs to inform organizations about stress management. Handouts focusing on the basics

of rational thinking are available.

Outside the University, Carolyn Rashti's Creative Realities in Chapel Hill offers individual and group courses in stress management.

The program views each student as an individual who may experience various stressors, Rashti said. To relieve these factors, Rashti attempts to sharpen the student's skills in self-understanding, self-esteem, relaxation and communication.

The course runs once a week for about 12 weeks. Individual sessions last for 2½ hours. Student fees are available.

Dr. Thomas Downing of the University Baptist Church supports spiritual guidance as an alternative to psychological counseling. One can modify stress, he said, through "consistency in worship and feeling that one's congregation accepts him as he is." He advised spiritual counseling as an important option for a student.

Tim Clayton, a sophomore from Huntersville, said biking and prayer helped him relieve stress.

"Also, it is important to keep up with things so they don't all bundle up," he said.

Kennedy Clark, a freshman from Raleigh said: "When I'm under stress, I play the guitar, sleep or listen to music. I find that budgeting my time helps. However, too much time allotment can cause problems."

With all the demands of college life, student stress may always exist. But Sue Gray of Student Health concluded, "Students on the whole are more in tune to stress today and more willing to talk."

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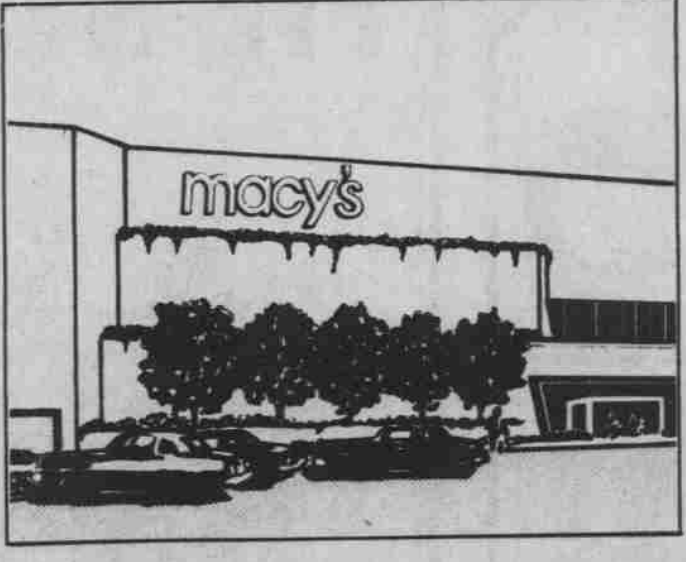
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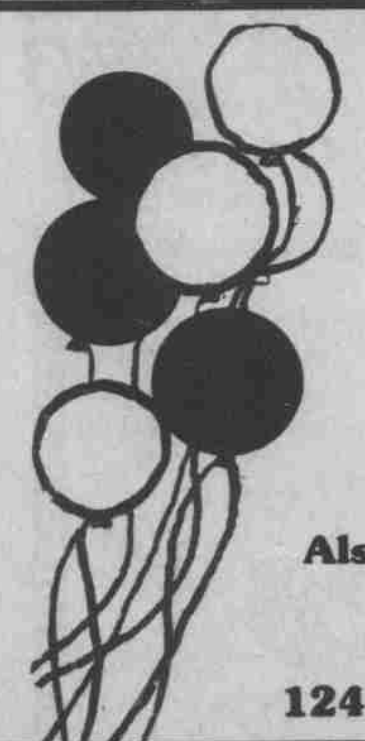
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