

Spencer's play debut gives an oft-told story new life

It's not a new story. A Southern gentleman is called back to his family home to arrange the sale of the aging house of his Mississippi youth. Over the course of a weekend of conflict and catharsis, he must not only resolve his relationships with the four significant women in his life but also confront his own demons in a final attempt to put his past to rest.

So begins "For Lease or Sale," this season's latest offering by PlayMakers Repertory Company (PRC). But the play does more than regurgitate the standard tale of the Southern family haunted by an outdated tradition as sweetly cloying and as inescapable as the scent of jasmine on a hot Mississippi night. Instead, playwright Elizabeth Spencer takes

Cara Bonnett
Theater

the story and runs with it. Spencer is probably best known as an author and short-story writer, for books like the critically acclaimed "Jack of Diamonds," "For Lease or Sale," which opened Saturday night, marks her debut into the realm of playwrighting.

And an auspicious debut it is. The play focuses on the Glenns, once a prestigious family of the old South but now victims of suburban progress and genteel poverty. Mrs. Glenn, the beloved family matriarch, is played by Joan Potter, veteran

Broadway and off-Broadway actress, while PRC guest artist Terrence Caza plays her son Edward.

Spencer's script is striking in its immediacy and humor. From Mrs. Glenn's outspoken (but always charming) observations to Edward's biting sarcasm, the loaded dialogue provides a uniquely endearing look at a family that is at once odd but also strangely familiar.

The characters are people we know, whether we are from Mississippi or not, and we hear their story more in the words they don't say than the ones they do. As Mrs. Glenn tells her granddaughter, the most important part of growing up is learning "how never to say exactly what you mean. It's part of having to be a lady."

Edward is a man caught at the

crossroads between present and past. Still haunted by his ex-wife Aline (Susanna Rinehart), he must reconcile his feelings about her with his new fascination for Claire Youngblood (Lisa Benedict). Although his motivation is not always clear or understandable, Edward remains somehow sympathetic, the classic Southern gentleman whose options are often limited to the two options facing every Southern gentleman: getting drunk or going fishing.

Lynn Passarella, as Edward's niece Patsy, is convincing as a wilting young Southern girl, waiting to be rescued from the dying family mansion by a (gasp!) man.

But the highlight of the show, without a doubt, is Potter's gracefully aging Southern matron. Threatened with losing all she has ever known, Mrs. Glenn still somehow maintains the ladylike composure upon which she prides herself, even as she attempts to sustain the fragile web of memory and tradition that binds her family together.

The elaborate set, from the well-worn railings on the house's wide staircase to the ancient Victrola in the sitting room, is especially helpful in developing the old Mississippi house as an ever-present and wonderfully vital character in the play.

There are, of course, moments

when the action falters. Mrs. Glenn's two monologues, for instance, seem rather stilted on stage; perhaps better suited for a short story than a play.

In addition, the scenes between Edward and his ex-wife are disconcertingly cold. Obviously the relationship is over, but Caza and Rinehart make it hard to believe that there was ever any spark at all.

But in the end, "For Lease or Sale" is successful. For just as Edward Glenn hears his own ghosts silenced in the play's final scene, so does Spencer put to rest the often-heard story of the Southern family, not with a tired reaffirmation of the past, but with a promise for the future.

Virtuoso guitar jams highlight Living Colour's sold-out show

A friend of mine has a theory about the rock music industry: Although it was black blues and R&B musicians who invented rock 'n' roll, it took someone like Elvis Presley to popularize it for mainstream white America. Likewise, rap had been blasting out of boom boxes for quite a while before the Beastie Boys turned away from punk and introduced their whited rap to the Top 40 world.

But then my friend started talking about how his own band fit into the scheme of things and I got sort of lost in the analogy. But the point is that black artists have not gotten their fair share, or due credit, in that giant apple pie of American life: the corporate rock world.

Of course, when bands like Poison or Bon Jovi tear up the pop charts to the delight of thousands of middle-class youths sporting their black leather jackets earned by tending the neatly manicured lawns of suburbia U.S.A., this whole, self-perpetuating music industry becomes even more, well, ridiculous.

Suffice it to say that when a band the likes of Living Colour, whose members happen to be black, not only get signed to a major record label like Epic but also in a relatively short amount of time garner a great deal of critical acclaim and attention, then yes, Virginia, whoever you are, there is justice in the world.



Vernon Reid shone in Living Colour's Friday night concert

Living Colour's debut album *Vivid* is good but pales in comparison to its live show, as it readily demonstrated to a jam-packed Memorial Hall last Friday. But before I go into what a great show it was, I'd like to say a few words about something dear to any spectator's heart, or at least to those who like to breathe without sucking in their neighbor's neck hair, and that is... crowd control.

Yes, yes, I'm complaining. But normally the pit in front of the stage is reserved mainly for those in the press. This rule is not just a perk for having to sit in front of a computer screen for two hours after a show trying to think of something to say, but helps said reviewer not only decide how the band sounded, but see what else is going on during a show. I mean, really, have you ever heard someone say, "I heard a great concert?"

But not only was the pit full of people, the aisle between it and the front row of seats was full of people trying to get to the green grass of the other side. And all that managed to accomplish was that half of the crowd was located in a tiny, narrow part of the auditorium. Unless you enjoy claustrophobically communal experiences with gyrating groupies, it just doesn't add up.

Physical comfort aside, the show was great (read: the show sounded great). The band played every song from *Vivid*, starting off with "Middle Man." One of the differences between the recorded and the live Living Colour is its tendency to guitar-jam on stage. Between the first song and the second, "Desperate People," lead guitarist Vernon Reid took over the show with a pretty incredible guitar solo, combining the band's hard rock with a spirit of funk and jazz improvisation.

The entire band is very talented — lead vocalist Corey Glover was an experienced teen actor and played Francis in Oliver Stone's "Platoon;"

Julie Olson Concert

drummer William Calhoun is a graduate of Boston's Berklee School of Music and winner of the school's "Buddy Rich Award" as a percussionist; and bassist Muzz Skillings is an experienced musician and graduate of the City College of New York.

But Reid easily stole the show with his guitar virtuosity. Comparisons to Hendrix are understandable after seeing Reid live, because only then can the sheer passion and intensity of his playing be witnessed (read: momentary glimpses through a swaying crowd).

The next song was Living Colour's version of Talking Heads' "Memories Can't Wait" and then the rap/rock "Funny Vibe" about racism. "Broken Hearts," "I Want to Know" and a harder version of "Glamour Boys" all followed. The refrain of "Glamour Boys" is, incidentally, "I ain't no glamour boy — I'm fierce," even though I could have sworn they were saying "I'm fish." (And that just didn't make any sense at all.)

The group demonstrated its social concern next with "Open Letter (to a Landlord)," a song about the housing problems in its hometown, New York. Next the band played one of the songs produced by Mick Jagger on *Vivid*, "Which Way to America," and finally its big radio hit "Cult of Personality."

An encore set is always a given, and after playing a thrashed-up

version of the Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go" that would have made those original radio-bashers proud, Living Colour performed the remaining song on its debut album, "What's Your Favorite Colour?"

All things considered, a fabulous show. Opened by a great hard-rocking set by locals Mary on the Dash, Living Colour showed it isn't just a token black group in a predominantly white industry but a good rock group, period. As Reid is quoted in the group's press release, "Living Colour is not just about being black and playing music that's indistinguishable from that of any white band. It's about bringing our own ethnic values to the music."

Don't appease hunger with nicotine

By JACKI GREENBERG
Staff Writer

Despite the well-known hazards of smoking, many people continue lighting up cigarettes to cut down on eating. A recent study found that almost one-third of smokers at Memphis State University smoke to avoid gaining weight.

"There is no way under the sun that smoking can be a healthy way to lose or maintain weight," said Dr. William Heizer, medical director of Carolina Fitness. "While being overweight is a risk, it is relatively minimal compared with smoking."

Nicotine in cigarette tobacco suppresses the appetite and increases the rate at which the body burns calories. So the strategy of smoking instead of snacking may help shed pounds. And many people do find it easier to maintain a certain weight when they smoke and tend to gain weight when they quit, Heizer said.

"Across the board — considering males and females in all socioeconomic groups — people will gain about seven pounds when they quit smoking," Heizer said. "And seven pounds is not much of a health risk to anybody."

According to Heizer, a person would have to be 50 percent above their ideal body weight to equal the risk of smoking 20 cigarettes a day. "All studies have shown that in any weight group, your chance of early death doubles if you smoke," he said. The risk is considerably higher for very overweight smokers.

"Nicotine is clearly an addicting drug," Heizer said. "The vast majority become physically and psychologically addicted and will not stop at one or two cigarettes a day." Very few can lose weight and quit smoking at the same time, he said.

According to Judy Hinderliter, program director and nutritionist at Carolina Fitness, it should be easier to quit smoking than to

lose weight. "You can quit smoking 'cold turkey,' but you can't just quit eating. You have to eat to live," she said.

A sophomore journalism major from Raleigh said cigarettes were more portable and cheaper than food. "Sometimes I'll smoke a cigarette instead of eating a Pop-tart," she said. "I don't consciously smoke instead of eat because I know I'll eventually eat something. But sometimes food isn't around."

Heizer said the key to weight control is decreasing the amount of fat intake. "Today, we're at the point with fat that we were 30 years ago with smoking," he said.

Aside from reducing fat in the diet, people must exercise, Hinderliter said. Smokers often have difficulty exercising because they can't get enough oxygen into their blood cells. "Exercise and smoking are not compatible, so hopefully the healthy one will win out."

Campus Calendar

The DTH Campus Calendar is a daily listing of University-related activities sponsored by academic departments, student services and student organizations officially recognized by the Division of Student Affairs. To appear in Campus Calendar, announcements must be submitted on the Campus Calendar form by NOON one business day before the announcement is to run. Saturday and Sunday events are printed in Friday's calendar and must be submitted on the Wednesday before the announcement is to run. Forms and a drop box are located outside the DTH office, 104 Union. Items of interest lists ongoing events from the same campus organizations and follows the same deadline schedule as Campus Calendar. Please use the same form.

Monday

10 a.m. **Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority** will be holding informal rush until 2 p.m. in 212 Union.

3 p.m. **Office of International Programs** will hold an informational meeting for Fall '89.

enrollment at the London School of Economics in 12 Caldwell.

4 p.m. **Career Planning and Placement Services** will conduct a resume writing workshop for internships or summer jobs in 210 Hanes.

German Department will sponsor a lecture on "Gustav Freytag's Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit: The Writing of National Cultural History and Realism." The lecture will take place in Toy Lounge, Day Hall.

4:30 p.m. **Office of International Programs** will hold an informational meeting about study abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark in 12 Caldwell.

5:30 p.m. **Sigma Sigma Sigma** will hold informal rush in 211 Union until 6:30 p.m.

GALA, the global issues committee of the Campus Y will show a film on the Greenhouse Effect in Frank Porter Graham Lounge, Union. All are welcome.

7 p.m. **Volunteer Action Committee (VAC)** will meet in the Campus Y lounge.

Carolina Students' Credit Union will hold an informational session until 9 p.m. to recruit all those interested in getting involved in the Union Auditorium lobby.

Race Relations Week Committee will be meeting in the BCC, Union. Everyone is welcome.

8:30 p.m. **Fellowship of Christian Athletes** will meet in 208-209 Union. Everyone invited.

Items of Interest

"Godspell" audition information can be picked up at the Union Desk.

Student Health Service — Mental Health Section is now forming a group for women interested in understanding the effects of childhood sexual abuse. Call 966-3658 for further information.

Union Bowling League will be holding sign-ups until Feb. 5 in the Union underground. Sign up for individual or team competition.

Yackety Yack is making appointments for yearbook portraits in 213 Union. Contact the Yack to make an appointment.

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For Information or to Volunteer call Mon.-Fri. 966-1761.

INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

UNC STUDY ABROAD FALL 1989

London School of Economics
January 30, Mon., 3:00
Room 12, Caldwell Hall

Copenhagen, Denmark
January 30, Mon., 4:30
Room 12, Caldwell Hall

Montpelier, France (Summer)
Jan. 31, Tues., 3:30
301 Dey Hall

Germany
Jan. 31, Tues., 5:00
Room 12, Caldwell Hall