

# Haunting, complex drama unfolds in the Lab Theatre

Tennessee Williams once wrote that "the human animal is a cannibal in the worst way," and in none of his plays is this dark vision more evident than "Suddenly Last Summer," which opened this weekend at Lab Theatre.

The play, which has the hypnotic — if horrifying — appeal of personal confession, is powerfully disturbing drama, exploring the emotional cannibalism of love and the self-cannibalism of art. It focuses on the conflict between two women: young Catharine, who witnessed the horrible death of her cousin Sebastian last summer, and Violet Venable, Sebas-

## Cara Bennett Theater

tian's mother, who will go to any length to prevent Catharine from telling her story.

Mrs. Venable, played by junior Laurie Dhue, is an aging Southern matron whose only way of hanging on to the past is by clinging to elaborately romanticized memories of her son. Dhue does a good job with a difficult character, playing the old woman with a desperate conviction that manages to be both pathetic and admirable at the same time.

Catharine, played by junior Jennifer Stratman, stands in direct opposition to her aunt. Stratman captures the audience's attention from her first appearance on stage — as a silent but strikingly beautiful figure seen through a far window. Throughout the play she remains a haunting, ethereal presence, like a child who is aware that she has somehow lost her innocence, but cannot understand why.

Sophomore Todd DeVries turns in an effective performance as the

doctor who must decide whether or not Catharine is truly crazy enough to deserve a lobotomy.

But in the middle of the conflict is Sebastian, who, although he never appears on stage, is perhaps the most compelling force in the play. Sebastian is a frustrated poet whose life has become as empty as his notebooks. He finds his enjoyment in the exploitation of others until, inevitably, his degeneration results in sudden, violent death.

All of Tennessee Williams' bitterness and remorse comes to the forefront in the character of Sebastian.

Williams, who was undergoing intensive psychoanalysis during the writing of "Suddenly Last Summer," is a master of poetic language, and his disturbing images and heightened emotions create a hideous story that is all the more tragic because of Williams' own personal investment in it.

It is to the Lab's credit that the production succeeds in walking the fine line of unrelenting tension without crossing over into self-indulgence.

The play runs for an hour and a half, without an intermission, and for

that brief time, we are swept away into a darkly bizarre world of corrupted beauty and unforgiven guilt. In the hands of director Andrew Edmonson and his cast, what could have become a confusing, meaningless exercise in the grotesque is instead a commendable production of a complex and thought-provoking play.

*Suddenly Last Summer* will be presented at the Lab Theatre in Graham Memorial at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 13 and at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 14. Admission is free.

## Sports

### Virginia

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this Sunday afternoon. "We didn't want them to come into our home place and celebrate on our floor," Bucknell said. "It's about time we did a little of that."

#### Men's Basketball

Saturday  
UNC vs. Virginia 67  
UNC — Fox 6-9 2-3 14. Rice 2-3 0-6 10. S. Williams 5-0 1-6 11. Bucknell 5-11 7-8 19. Lebo 2-6 6-6 12. Madson 3-7 2-4 8. Chilcott 1-3 0-2 2. Rice 2-5 2-3 6. Davis 1-1 1-3 3. Denny 0-1 0-0 0. Herrely 0-0 0-0 0. Greene 0-0 0-0 0. May 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 27-52 27-41 85.  
Virginia — Stith 9-18 2-4 20. Bundini 5-9 6-8 16. DeBba 0-5 0-0 0. Morgan 5-22 0-1 12. Croft 3-11 1-4 8. Turner 1-2 0-0 2. C. Williams 1-4 0-0 2. Daniel 0-3 1-2 1. Oliver 1-4 0-0 2. Kestler 1-2 1-2 4. Cooke 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 26-80 11-21 87.  
Halftime Score: UNC 44-42. Three-point goals — UNC 4-10 (Lebo 2-4). Assists — Virginia 14. Madson 0-1. Virginia 4-20 (Morgan 4-4). Foul shots — UNC 21-24. Madson 0-1. Virginia 21-24. Fouls — UNC 22. Virginia 29. A — 2144.

Only the home team celebrated on

### Track's Austin shines

From staff reports

LINCOLN, NEB. — The UNC men's and women's track and field teams prepared for nationals by competing in the Frank Sevigne Husker Invitational on Saturday.

Kim Austin and Mia Pollard had outstanding performances in the meet, as the Tar Heels qualified for the NCAA meet in three different events.

UNC head coach Dennis Craddock was pleased, saying "We were running against teams from Southern California, Nevada-Las Vegas and Kansas which we usually don't see during the season. Running today gave us an idea of what to expect in the national meet."

Austin qualified for nationals in the 55-meter high hurdles and the triple jump. She won the triple jump with a 41'7" leap and took third place in the hurdles with a time of 7.82. The UNC women's two-mile relay team also qualified with a first place finish, coming in at 8:48.10.

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Freshman superstar Angie Denkins followed with a beautiful, powerful, event-winning 9.6 score. Radford's Jennifer Herpok took second place with a 9.0.

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