

Spotlight

PlayMakers to lead up to Christmas with adult fairy tale

By ERIC ROSEN
Staff Writer

Fairy tales can come true, and they're coming true at PlayMakers Repertory Company starting Saturday night. But "The Nutcracker: A Play," which will run through Dec. 23, is as much a story for adults as it is for children. This production of the famous Christmas story is not the Tchaikovsky ballet, but a new dramatic adaptation of the original 1816 novella, "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King," by E.T.A. Hoffman. The upcoming production is markedly different in plot and style from the traditional ballet. The new version reinstates the major plot elements from the original story,

while the ballet is based on a French adaptation of Hoffman's original novella, according to PlayMakers artistic director David Hammond. "It leaves out the major episodes in the Hoffman book and concentrates on the initial and final chapters only," Hammond said. Much of the upcoming production will be new to audiences, as playwright Karl Joos has encompassed the whole story, as well as adapting elements of other Hoffman stories, Hammond said. Susanna Rinehart, a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Dramatic Art, emphasized the nature of the play as an adult fairy tale. "We had a mother and her children watching a rehearsal, and she told us that this was

definitely not a rated-G production," Rinehart said. Rinehart, who has been a part of the University community as an undergraduate, graduate student and faculty member for eight years, plays Mousierinks, the inherently evil facet of the story. She admits that the character she plays is very different from those she has portrayed in the past. "Sometimes it's like being possessed, playing a character so extreme. Three or four years ago, I wouldn't have had the technique or courage to do the role. There are no small choices — no limitations — with this part," she said. She also observed that the produc-

tion, which has extremely difficult technical and acting aspects, is a sign of the development of the company. "The play is a stepping-stone. It's not a safe choice. I don't know that 'The Nutcracker' is a play the company could have done before. The acting is so risky; the technical aspects are very intense. Everyone keeps developing, getting better and better. "We have to commit to the seriousness of the piece, or it becomes a cartoon. It's not saccharin; it's not too cute to touch. It has the childlike appeal that we as adults love to recapture," she said. Visiting artist Ray Dooley, who plays the mythological good wizard Drossel-

meier, sees the play as a psychological examination of the process of growing up. "Over the last 40 years, psychiatrists have been coming to see fairy tales as an expression of the unconscious. The play is an outward expression of the inner journey, the story of the child leaving the Garden of Eden of childhood." Dooley emphasized the value of working on this production, specifically because of its basis in fantasy. "Any time you are working on a show there's always a psychological richness. We have to learn to behave in a truthful manner. This play has a large style of acting, with great acting commitments. We have actors playing nice.

It calls for actors committing on a grand scale." Both Dooley and Rinehart, however, add that "The Nutcracker" is a play for Christmas. "The world being redeemed from evil, love and faith and the belief in the power of love — those are all Christmas themes," Dooley said. For Rinehart, the production "is about love, and magic and childhood. It's like having Christmas every day. What could be more wonderful than that?" PlayMakers Repertory Company will present "The Nutcracker: A Play" at the Paul Green Theater beginning Dec. 2 and running through Dec. 23. For more information, call 962-1121.

Ever-unique Loreleis in fine tune for promising Friday concert

By VICKI HYMAN
Staff Writer

They're back in black, and they're singing better than ever. The Loreleis, UNC's female cappella singing group, will perform Friday at PlayMakers Theatre at 8 p.m. The Loreleis is one of the more diverse singing groups on campus. "We're not your basic barber shop group," said senior Melanie Rice, publicity manager for the group. "We're different. We're known for black. We always wear black and white." Although the concert will feature a wide variety of music, from Latin pieces to The Who and Basia, it is mostly pop-oriented, Rice said. "We do a lot of 'pop-a-rock.' We're not your typical cappella group." Junior Susan Johnson agreed. "It's fun, upbeat material. It's a lot of stuff people will recognize. But we've al-

ways been diverse, which is one of our strongest points." But the show will also feature some classic rock numbers, said senior Paige Elrod, president of Loreleis. "We like to do a variety. We're doing a lot of old classics ... (such as) 'Leave It' by Yes." Both Rice and Elrod expect a large turnout for the concert. "I'm really excited about it. We just realized that we are a lot more prepared than we thought we were," Elrod said. "I wish we had a larger place, though. There's always a problem of not having enough tickets for the number of people who want to come." The Loreleis are in their third year since the group took a hiatus from 1984 to 1985. The group formed in 1980 and then reappeared — new and improved — in 1986. Rice said: "Since then (1986), it's been getting a lot better. We had 45 girls try out for six or seven

positions last year." Elrod also notices the competition for membership in Loreleis. "It's harder to get into the group. We do encourage people to try out. We're not just looking for soloists. We need people who just enjoy singing on a lot of different parts. We like a wide variety of voices." One thing that distinguishes the Loreleis from other female singing groups is the group's range, Elrod said. "We have a lot more depth and lower range. We sing a lot of things guys can sing. We sing really low to really high — it's a better blend, a fuller sound. We also sing a lot of things not normally done by a cappella group." The lack of accompaniment makes the music harder to perform, Rice said. "It's a little different, and it takes a pretty musically competent person to do it well."

This year's group is also very young. Half of the 15-member group is new, Elrod said. "It's a lot of fun, hearing all the new voices singing different songs." One advantage of the group's small size is the closeness that the group shares, Rice said. "You get to know everyone really well. We practice at least twice a week, for two or more hours on an off-week. With the concert coming up, we're together every night." Johnson said this year's Loreleis was the best incarnation of the group. "This year we've really come together with our voices. We even hope to record a record next semester." The group does hope to improve its choreography, Johnson said. "We always want to choreograph our concerts, but we're always really busy with the music until the last minute." Since their reformation in 1986, the Loreleis have gained increased recognition around campus and Chapel Hill. "At first, it was like, 'Loreleis... who?' Now, I think everyone knows who we are," Elrod said. Rice also remarked on the growing reputation of the group. "We get asked to do a lot more than we can possibly do. We have done up to 50 appearances and concerts a semester ... we've done as many as five a day."



UNC's female cappella group the Loreleis

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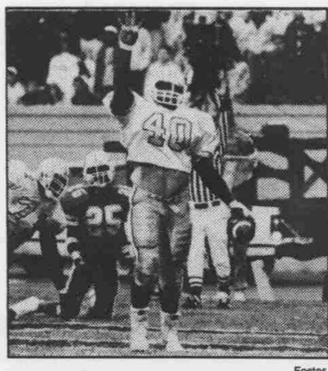
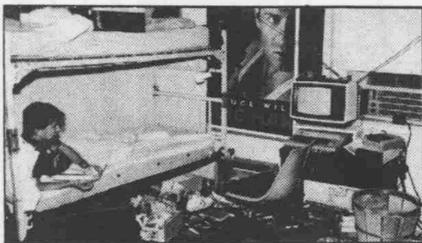
Walter said that he thought an agreement was possible in El Salvador, but that it would require concessions by both the guerrillas and the government. "The guerrillas would have to give up their dream of a one-party revolutionary state like Cuba." Walter said he thought the guerrillas would be willing to make such concessions. When members of the audience questioned the protesters about what they hoped to do about the situation with a demonstration in Chapel Hill, they responded by saying they wanted to educate people. They also asked

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informing them of his plans, Nichols said. "I'm going to stay in the hotel overnight with a Norwegian journalist I had dinner and drinks with," Bell reportedly said. Apparently, Bell had been informed that the situation outside was too risky due to armed guards around the hotel who were firing shots at the crowds. He had been advised by various reporters, who he described as the best-informed people in Beijing, to stay overnight. The next morning, Bell contacted a reporter from NBC news asking for suggestions on how to get to the airport. The Wake Forest students, traveling under a group visa, were returning to the United States. The news reporter he spoke with handed Bell a tape of Beijing footage and asked him to deliver it to the American office. "This is standard operation procedure for television crews to get television videos out of (foreign) countries," said Peggy Hubble, spokeswoman for NBC news. "He offered his services, and we're grateful." The tape represented the first images of the student riots seen in America. Litcher and Ewing were originally

angry that Bell, by carrying the tape out of China, endangered the lives of the other students. Upon their return to the United States, they filed a report with the Honor Council. "(Bell) was a little paltry student who saw China politically explode while his two professors stayed in their hotel room," Nichols said. The claim fell under a Wake Forest Honor Code provision regarding "deliberate attempt by a student to make a personal gain at the expense of another member of the college community." Bell was tried for lying, found guilty, and received a penalty and probation, said Carol Teague, chairwoman of the Honor Council. Bell is a senior awaiting December graduation. He is under probation until December and must write a letter of apology to the professors and students involved. The student who accompanied Bell was a senior, but he was not tried because he had already graduated. Bell plans to appeal, Nichols said. During the seven-hour trial Tuesday night, Litcher argued that there is a separate duty to one's country and a separate duty to one's school. Bell received an A in the study abroad class.

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