

Senior theatre capstone

By Carmen Boone
Copy Editor

Clara Reichhard is a senior theatre major at Brevard College. Her senior capstone project was putting together and directing "Little Box of Oblivion."

The premiere was held on Friday, Feb. 21 and a second performance on Saturday, Feb. 22 both at 7 p.m. in the Porter Center's Morrison Playhouse.

"A Little Box of Oblivion" is a one act play written by Stephen Bean that runs about 45 minutes.

Reichhard chose to direct it because she feels that directing is a very well rounded art.

"Directing encompasses a lot of different fields," said Reichhard. "You have to work with the actors, you have to work with the technicians, like lighting, sound and all of that."

The play included just five actors and actresses. Molly Ellis King played Cool (female), Talley Sugg played Woman, Jannie Kurtz played Neuro (female), Gabbi Nicholson played Doom (female) and Scott Douglas played Dick (male). There were many other people behind the scenes that worked to make the production possible.

Reichhard thanks the entire cast and crew.

She also sends a big thanks to Patrice Foster and Andrea Boccanfuso, who have been a great help to her along the way of getting to where she is.

The humorous play starts with Cool on a park bench reading a newspaper. Woman runs by and begs Cool to watch her box. She says not to touch, shake, move, or do anything of that sort with the box. Then, Neuro comes along and suspects that it is a bomb. Following that, Doom shows up, suspecting anthrax. To round it off, a British character named Dick comes in guessing the object in the box is a severed human head.

After there is much speculation, Cool gets fed up. She picks up the box and shakes it violently above her head, distressing the other three characters on the scene who have very dramatic reactions.

Woman then rushes back in and yells at Cool to set the box down gently. She is very worried that Cool has destroyed what is in the box. After a moment, she reveals that her tortoise is hibernating in the box, and the box was not nearly as horrid a thing as what any of the speculators had thought.

The play ends with Neuro, Doom and Dick closing in on Cool, taunting her about how awful it was that she shook the box. She runs out and

just before the characters disperse, Cool is heard screaming. Lights go out, scene.

Reichhard says this play is important to her because it's something dark but includes the subject of mental illness. Neuro, Doom and Dick are meant to be figments of Cool's imagination. "That's what makes it fun to me. It's a very dark subject matter packaged in humor," said Reichhard. It has dark themes but is surrounded by comedy.

The process for this play was long. It started with picking the play and researching it. Then, Reichhard read it a couple times and did an analysis. She then held auditions to cast it followed by making a rehearsal schedule.

After that came read throughs, staging, scene work, running it, tech, dress rehearsals and finally, the show itself.

Reichhard began at Brevard College as a theatre major so it is "dear to my heart," as she would say. It teaches discipline and accountability, which she says has been challenging but rewarding. "There's ups and downs but it's such a creative field and such a, you know, fun thing to do," said Reichhard. "And there's a lot of really creative and awesome people in the theatre."

The Blanket Octopi

By Solomon Turner
Staff Writer

The Blanket Octopi, consisting of four species, show the largest difference in sexual size in the entire animal kingdom. According to *Our Breathing Planet*, the females can grow up to two meters (6.6 feet) while the males are only around 2.4 centimeters (0.94 inches). That's a 10,000 to one weight ratio!

Coloration can vary widely because, like most cephalopods, they have chromatophores (pigment cells) but they generally display impressive mixes of silver, dark blue and purple pigments.

According to *The Tree Of Life*, each of the four species of *Tremoctopus* spp. inhabit all tropical and subtropical waters. *T. violaceus* is found in the Atlantic, *T. gracilis* in the Indo-Pacific, *T. gelatus* in the deep sea of tropical and temperate oceans and *T. robsoni* off the coast of New Zealand.

Their common name is derived from the unique appendages that connect the dorsal and dorsolateral tentacles. These long transparent webs, according to National

Geographic, can be dropped to distract a potential predator as it makes a speedy escape along with the stereotypical ink cloud. The billowing blankets are also used to intimidate predators by making the octopus appear larger.

According to National Geographic, the reasoning for the adaptation for sexual size difference isn't completely understood but it is assumed that the males put more energy into searching for females instead of growing. The size difference however begs the question, how do they reproduce?

Population occurs in a strange and life ending



Courtesy of Australian Geographic

Blanket Octopus reveals unfurled blankets.

way for the male. The tiny male will rip off its hectocotylus, an arm that acts as the penis, and hand it over to the female. The male will bleed out but this effort doesn't ensure that it will actually pass on its genes.

The female will carry hectocotylus of multiple males and choose the best to fertilize the eggs. When the female fertilizes the eggs, generally over 100,000, she will carry them until they hatch after which she too will die.

The young, being small and palatable to many marine organisms, use a strange defense mechanism, strange even for the animal kingdom. According to an article published in *The Science Magazine* in 1963, the young octopi will rip off tentacles of cnidarians, generally from the Portuguese man o' war, and use the stinging fragments as a defense mechanism.

While they are listed as least concern on the IUCN Red List this is likely due to the lack of information regarding these organisms as the page has no information beyond the generally taxonomic information. There is much to learn about these unique marine cephalopods!