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The City Without Love

Russian folk tale concludes drama season

Drama Correspondent

The North Carolina Central University will close the 1995-1996 season with a production of *The City Without Love*, a Russian folk tale written by Lev Ustinov and directed by Doris Schneider.

The City Without Love has a universal theme expressing the emptiness and "grayness" of a society or even a single individual who has not loved.

It ultimately encourages conscious choices of leaders and warns against following those who would denounce good and reward evil.

The play begins in a city where people fearfully deny their better qualities. There is no laughter and only hidden smiles and kindness. The commentators (a cat and dog) talk to the audience about the sad state of affairs.

At the arrival of the clown (a bearer of magic and laughter) and the urchin (a bearer of courage, curiosity and hope), the townspeople defensively protect the status quo and follow their corrupt leaders.

Very soon in the play, the people begin to learn from the clown and urchin, thus causing them to release their own creative and humanistic values.

They covertly imitate the clown's juggling and the urchin's acrobatics. As their love grows they all begin to question the leaders and defend the clown.

The urchin, with the help of the swallow outwits the leaders and saves the clown. His courage is



Bettina Freese, as Anna and Vincent Terry as the Clown, in *City Without Love*

contagious and the people revolt. The clown is then able to teach the townspeople how to laugh and enjoy life.

The play concludes with an upbeat song focusing on the concept of building a rainbow around the Earth.

Schneider believes that even adults will find this play as meaningful and entertaining as children. Each age group will take something different from the performance based on their individual life experiences.

This is the seventh play Schneider has directed at NCCU.

"This experience differs because so many artists have been brought into the regular production family to add to the richness of the performance," said Schneider.

Some of those individuals include Montrose "Monty" Moses, Jonathan Nyberg, Frankie

Bumphus, Adam Cave, Bettina Freese, William C. Brown and Douglass Graves.

NCCU alumnus, Oba, served as music director and composer for the play.

"Oba is wonderful to work with. Rather than impose his own style or musical preferences, he tries to sense the mood and action of the script," said Schneider. "He also writes for the voices of the performers. He even considers the type of music the actors like to sing."

Performances are April 12, and 13 at 7:15 p.m. and April 13 and 14 at 3:15 p.m. All performances will be held in the University Theatre in the Farrison-Newton Communications Building located on the corners of Fayetteville and Lawson Streets.

Tickets are available by calling the NCCU ticket office at 560-5170.

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