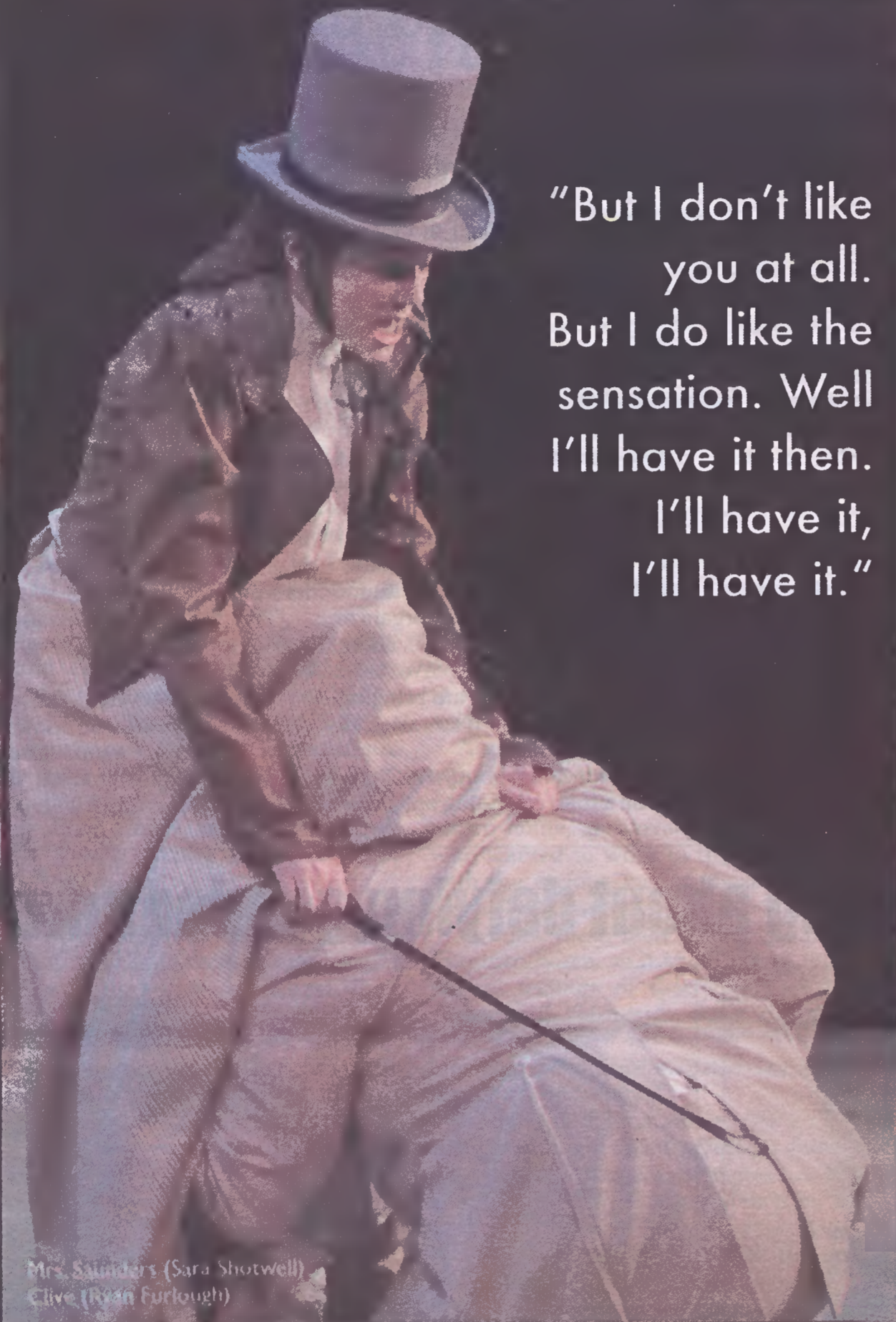


## CLOUD

STORY BY LAUREN NEWMAYER



Mrs. Saunders (Sara Shotwell)  
Clive (Ryan Furlough)

"But I don't like  
you at all.  
But I do like the  
sensation. Well  
I'll have it then.  
I'll have it,  
I'll have it."

"Girls will be boys, and boys will be girls, it's a mixed up, muddled up, shook up world" in Caryl Churchill's "Cloud Nine." The play, which explores and challenges the social norms of gender, sexuality, race and class, will be performed April 3-5 and April 10-12 at 8:00 p.m. in Sternberger Auditorium.

"Cloud Nine," produced onstage for the first time in London in 1979, was the product of a workshop on sexual politics with the Joint Stock Theatre Company that Churchill attended in 1978.

"It's an unusual play because the first act is set in 1874, British empire Africa, but the second act is set in 1979 London," said Jack Zerbe, the play's director and professor of theatre studies. "And even though it's 105 years later, three of the characters have only aged 25 years."

Cloud Nine uses same-sex relationships and cross gender casting to challenge stereotypes. In the first act, sophomore Ben Storey plays Betty, the young wife of Clive, played by junior Ryan Furlough. Sophomore Mary Pearl Monnes plays their young son Edward, and their daughter Victoria is portrayed by a dummy, representing the Victorian expectation for young women to act as submissive dolls.

"By casting people against gender it points out the constructedness of those roles in our society," Storey said.

Betty longs to have an affair with Harry, a gay explorer who has engaged in secretive sexual encounters with both the family's black servant and Betty and Clive's young son Edward. Meanwhile, Edward apparently struggles with his own sexuality. He professes his love to Harry and plays with dolls in secret. By making the relationships between Harry and Betty, and Harry and Edward, simultaneously same-sex and hetero-sexual, Cloud Nine deliberately topples socially constructed norms.

In the second act, which takes place in 1979, each family member is more open with themselves and others about their gender identities and sexuality.

"By 1979, the world has changed enough that you start to see people beginning to imagine a world without these socially constructed norms," Zerbe said. "So in the second act there is a wife who leaves her husband to begin a relationship with another woman. There is a gay male couple. There is a middle age woman who discusses the joys of rediscovering masturbation. It's really out-there stuff."

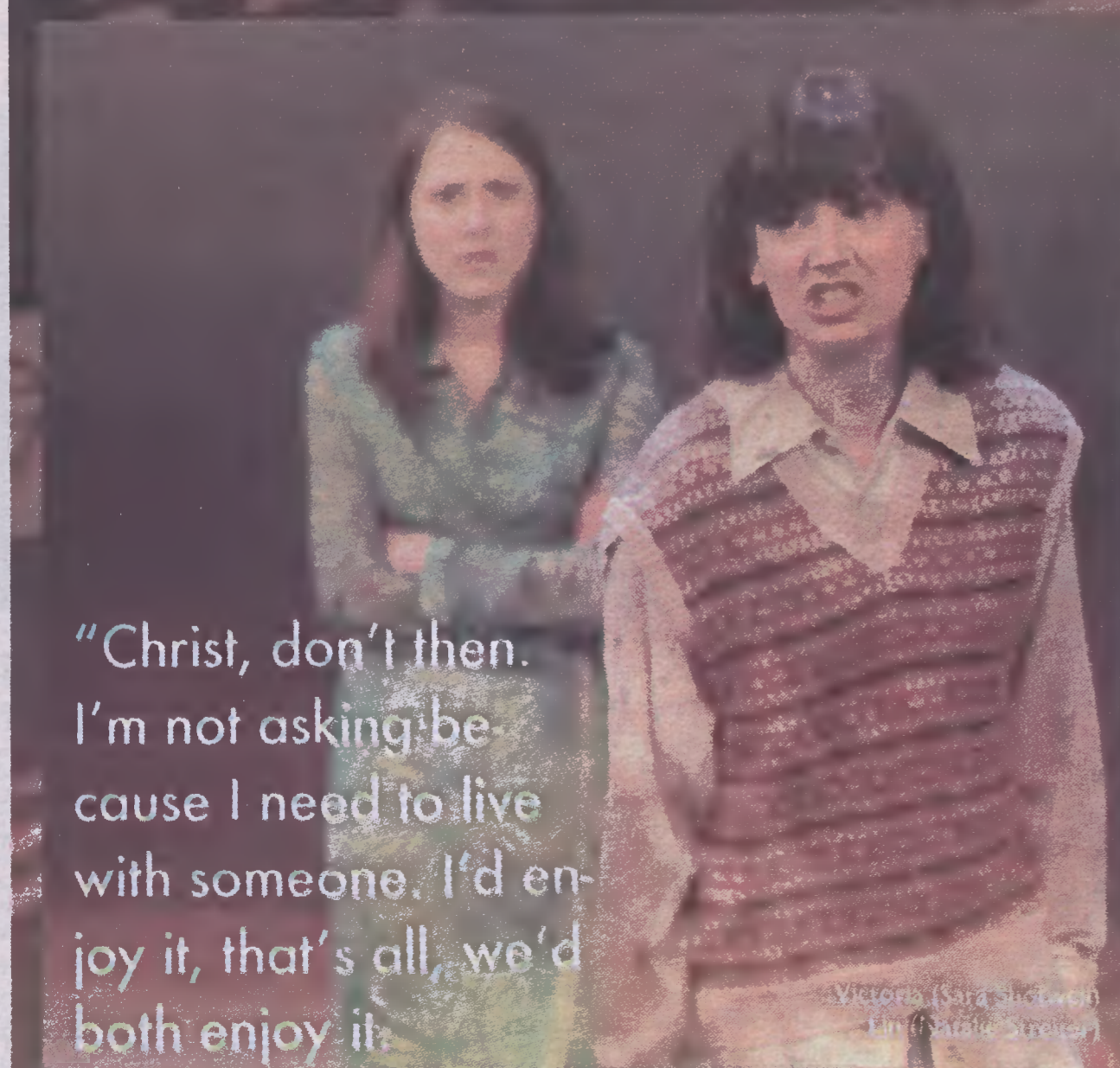
Although the play deals with heavy and often controversial issues,



"Think of the com  
men, Harry  
adventures, sha  
risking their live  
— What are yo

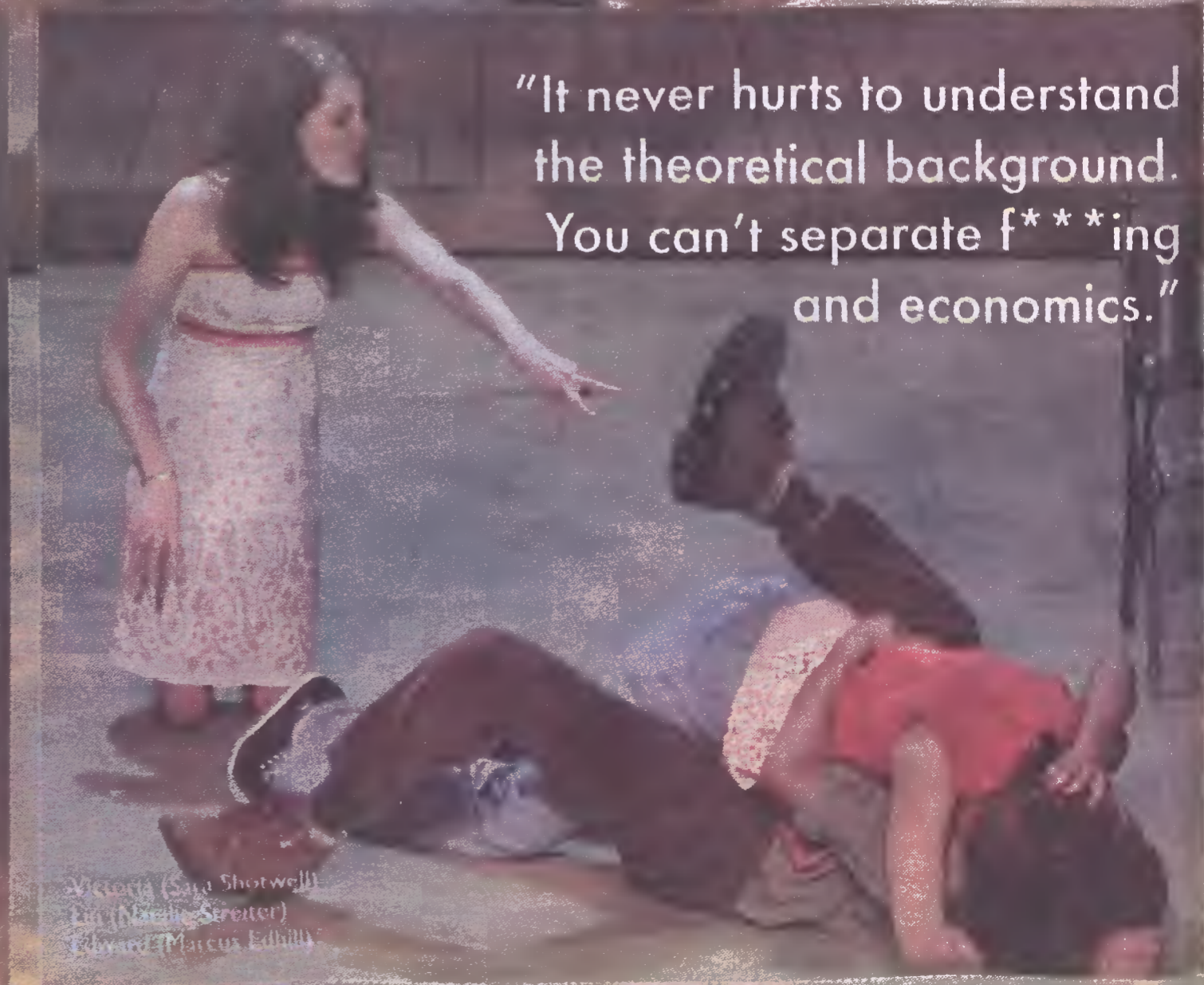
April 3-5 and April 10-12 at 8 p.m.  
Sternberger Auditorium

Tickets can be reserved in the lobby of  
hours. Admission is free for Guilford st



"Christ, don't then.  
I'm not asking be-  
cause I need to live  
with someone. I'd en-  
joy it, that's all, we'd  
both enjoy it."

Victoria (Sara Shotwell)  
Clive (Ryan Furlough)



"It never hurts to understand  
the theoretical background.  
You can't separate f\*\*king  
and economics."

Victoria (Sara Shotwell)  
Clive (Ryan Furlough)  
Edward (Marcus Edhill)