

A Very Subjective Review of *Talking With*

By Sarah Corbitt

On March 19 and 20, Saint Mary's staged a performance of Jane Martin's play *Talking With*.

This play was not your average Oklahoma. Characters were older and mature, and their monologues were deep and personal. It was not a family show, although smaller members of the audience did find the play humorous. The actresses were, in order of their appearance: Katherine Bauso in "Fifteen Minutes"; Elizabeth Olson in "Scraps"; Beth Miller in "Clear Glass Marbles"; Lisa Mann in "Audition"; Holly Wilensky in "Rodeo"; Elly Fuller in "Twirler"; Carmella La Bianca in "Handler"; Annika Schauer in "Dragons"; Kittie Lassiter in "French Fries"; and Sarah Corbitt in "Marks."

Kate Bauso's character, Moira, was an actress preparing to go onstage. She was having a hard time performing before people she didn't know anything about, but the audience got to read selected information about her life. She felt it was unfair. Kate has a lot of experience in theater, as her performance showed. The part surprised the audience when the house lights were turned on and the aspiring actress looked at the people she was performing for.

Elizabeth Olson played the part of a housewife who retreats from the loneliness of her marriage and her uneventful life into the magic of the Oz books. During the monologue, when the woman began talking about things that were obviously painful and intimate for her, she would fall back to the safety of Oz. She believed that if anything bad was ever to happen to her, she would be saved by Ozma and her magic picture. I thought Elizabeth was excellent, especially when she screamed, making the audience quite uncomfortable, "God, I hated school! How can anybody like it? You can live a whole life and never have to subtract." I'm sure that sent shivers down the backs of those who felt the part hit home too closely.

Beth Miller also affected the audience. Many were found in tears after Beth performed her monologue, which was about a young woman whose mother had died two weeks earlier. Obviously deeply moved by her own acting, Ms. Miller also moved many of the older members of the audience.

The audience was wowed when Lisa Mann finished her piece. She played an actress trying out for a role. Ms. Mann, playing the role of Mary Titfer, gave the people three choices. They could a) "let this poor desperate deluded girl debase herself" which she would do by taking off all her clothes or b) stop Miss Titfer from undressing her-

self, in which case she would kill her cat, Tat, who she had conveniently brought with her. The very last option that Miss Titfer gave was that after she got the part it would be taken from her because she needed psychiatric attention, in which case she would kill the cat and herself in front of them. The monologue is fantastically incomplete, there is no conclusion that gives the audience any hint as to what happens. Leaves you hanging.

"Rodeo" was perhaps the most comical of the pieces. Holly Wilensky played a roper whose rodeo had been sold out by men in banker suits. The part was very funny and gave listeners a taste of real country. It did have a message that went farther than Lurlene's warning against smoking tobacco. The closing of her monologue was as follows, "Well, you look out, honey! They want to make them a dollar out of what you love. Dress you up like Minnie Mouse. Sell your rodeo...You hear what I'm sayin'? You're jus' merchandise to them, sweetie. You're jus' merchandise to them." The part was very effective, as we have all had some personal experience in begin sold out.

Elly Fuller played the part of April March, a young woman who finished fourth in 'the Nationals' (baton-twirling competition, that is) when she was in high school. April endured tragedy when her hand was crushed by a horse named Big Blood Red. From that point in her life, twirling became to her a way to see God and to worship him. April was very connected to her baton and the sensations she felt while 'throwing herself up to God.' If all people felt such glory in the name of God, I can guarantee it wouldn't be hard at all to make people go to Chapel. Ms. Fuller was incredibly convincing in her portrayal of April March.

There are parts in plays in which something is threatened that is never carried out. Carmella La Bianca's character Caro in Handler was not such a role. Caro is a woman whose immediate family handles snakes. They all had handled until her brother Jamie went to Detroit, and her mother, Miss Ellie, died. Snake handling means that they held snakes in church services, and those people who had the spirit of God in them were not big by the poisonous snakes. Those who were bit were still sometimes saved. Caro knew that there was no God in those services at the Holiness Church. Carmella used a live snake, shaking the audience. The part ended with the powerful saying, which Carmella did wonderfully, "If you're empty, you're gonna get bit." Makes you think, doesn't it?

You may bet tired of me saying

that all the actresses were great and that their roles were powerful, but I promise I do not exaggerate. Those of you who came know I do not lie; certainly not in the case of Annika Schauer's performance of *Dragons*, in which she gives birth to a deformed child she describes as a dragon. I have never actually seen anyone give birth, but I suspect Ms. Schauer was very accurate. There is not much else I

was cut by a man in the parking lot, at which point her life became incredibly interesting and she decided to tattoo her entire body. At the closing of the play, we discover that the woman is now cutting people in much the same manner that she was cut so that their lives will become interesting like hers. She advises the audience to let the world around them interest them and 'mark' them, because it is all they



Kittie Lassiter in her role as French Fries

can say about this except, "Great job, Annika. You really looked terrible."

Of the light roles, Kittie Lassiter played an elderly woman who believes highly in the beauty of plastic and its place in God's world. She also finds McDonald's a haven to which she can go in safety. Maybe children today will grow up these ideas. I have babysat for kids who think plastic comes from trees, like wood. In any case, the role makes you think about what it would be like to live in a place that seemingly never gets dirty (although my brother worked there and he says it gets pretty dirty) and is the epitome of the American Dream. Great job, Kittie.

The last part is one that I know well, and I will not attempt to rate the actress, except to say that I hope you liked the part. It is of a woman in her forties who had a simple, boring life, and who tried to do everything right until her husband left her. Then, while attempting to date again, she

have.

Well, what a play! If you went you know that it was powerful, and moving, and pathetic, and all the things that a good play should be. Simply incredible!!! If you see these people around congratulate them for the excellent job they did.

Others that definitely should not be left out of the congratulations are the directors, Dr. Tom Bauso and Dr. Beth Proctor. They were excellent to work with and provided guidance and support and good advice. Also, Lynn Cvjetnic and Brennie Sharpe helped keep backstage under control with their excellent stage direction. Millicent Mooring, Judith Freeman, and Beth Farr lent immeasurable talent by doing the lighting with the assistance of John Spain. And last, but not least, Chiaki Noguchi was the piano accompanist whose playing beautifully complemented the play.

Congratulations, everyone! You did a fabulous job!!!