

'Circle' sets Studio I artistic standard

Joining the comic spirit of the Marx Brothers with the ideology of Marxist theater, the inaugural production by Department of Dramatic Arts Studio I, "The Caucasian Chalk Circle," makes a shiver-inducing artistic statement, if not quite as effective of a political one. It does have a message to give, though, and it gives it with spirit, heart and most of all, music.

LILY THAYER

Theater Review
"The Caucasian Chalk Circle"
DDA Studio 1
Playmakers Theatre
Tickets \$3

Written in 1945 by the German father of epic theater, Bertolt Brecht, "The Caucasian Chalk Circle" is a story of justice and redemption told in the Chinese tradition of storytelling — there is one protagonist whose story intersects with that of many other characters. In this case, seventy other characters.

The play's title actually has nothing to do with race, but rather with the Russian Caucasus Mountains, where the story of a young servant woman thrown into extraordinary circumstances unfolds. Autumn Dornfeld is understated yet convincing as the woman who finds herself on the lam with the infant son of the city's

assassinated governor as war rages in Europe.

In addition to Dornfeld, the ensemble cast of eight women and one man brilliantly portrays 70 different characters, only about 50 percent of whom are specifically female. The result is a lot of what director Ted Shaffner calls "cross-gender portrayals": women playing male characters.

Particularly effective at the gender and character transformations is Tylila Pinkham. Pinkham is impressively masculine as the sickly, domineering man Dornfeld's character finds herself married to in a bid to legitimize the child. Also noteworthy is Jordana Davis, whose Soldier cultivates a genuinely moving relationship with Dornfeld, despite a line-obscuring Scottish brogue. Amy Amerson, who has distinguished herself in other productions by her brave willingness to physically and vocally disfigure herself to often comic effects, is in similar form here: a compelling presence. Betsy Gordon and Penni Tinsley also transform themselves well and put in memorable, if, in Tinsley's case, over-subtle performances. The cast is well-completed by Wes Baker, Julie Castle, Michelle Coppedge and Michelle Ries.

Shaffner, who is an uncredited, yet powerful onstage presence as the rhythm and guitar accompanist to the plot, has looked to the production from a socially informed, street-theater perspective. The staging on the blank Playmakers stage is minimal, relying on a phenomenally creative sound — the making of which the whole cast participates in — and consistently anachronistic costume design instead of lighting and intricate sets. The final show is tonight at 8 p.m. in Playmakers Theater.

FESTIFALL

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attention," he said.

Pressley said there were about 15 to 20 extra officers at the fair. "They are just here to monitor the crowd," he said. "We want to make sure that everyone who has come to lawfully participate can do so."

Pressley also said alcohol often created problems in large crowds. However, because Festifall prohibited alcohol, there

were few problems, he said.

Mike Loveman, Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation director, said the fair was pretty much what the department had been hoping for. "I haven't heard of any problems today or of many problems in past years," Loveman said.

Police officers were out all day to provide security, but there is typically not much of a problem, he said. "The police are looking for potential problems, but the atmosphere here is such that there is

little here to attract people who would create problems," he said.

Loveman contrasted the fall festival with the annual spring event AppleChill. That festival, he said, has had problems in the past involving cruisers.

"It sounds funny, but one of the main areas of enforcement is dogs," Loveman said. "Security is not so much the issue at the fair. It's more walking down the middle of the street and seeing vendors and entertainment you don't usually see."

INSTITUTE

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rent space, and the new building will be an asset," he said. It will be equipped with up-to-date technology and a classroom for students.

"There will be a teaching lab with new technology for the faculty to incorporate into their teaching," said Speed Hallman, director of communications for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Since sabbaticals are not available for the faculty from the school of Arts and Sciences, one of the goals of the institute is to provide fellowships, Hallman said.

"Fellowships have been for faculty since Carolina has no sabbatical programs — that's one reason the institute was

started," he said.

Hallman said the fellowships provided the faculty with the opportunity to support each other and engage themselves in work.

"It rejuvenates and re-energizes them. They can sort of step back and take a new look at things.

Campus Calendar

Monday

4 p.m. — Judith Wegner, the dean of the UNC School of Law, will present a session on the Texas vs. Hopwood decision, its impacts and its consequences, in 106 Carrol Hall. The lecture will also feature Julius Chambers, the chancellor of N.C. Central University, and Marilyn Yarborough, a professor at the UNC School of Law.

5 p.m. — Red Ribbon will be holding a meeting in the Campus Y basement.

7 p.m. — The Student Health Service Diabetes Support Group will have a meeting. Call 966-6562 for information.

7 p.m. — The UNC Ballroom Dance Club will meet in 026 Woolen Gym. At 7:30 p.m. there will be a third lesson on waltz, and at 8:30 there will be a first lesson on cha-cha, after which there will be music to practice these and other dances. For more information call 929-5673.

7 p.m. — The UNC Young Republicans will meet at 7 p.m. in 209 Manning Hall. There will be a guest speaker, and a media event will be planned. All students are encouraged to attend. YR T-shirts and Carolina Review T-shirts will go on sale.

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