

Sisters Outshine Other Parts of 'Body'

By JIM MARTIN
Senior Writer

One can surmise that a play titled "Why We Have a Body" would inherently ask tough questions about life, love and who we are. And playwright Claire Chafee does ask those questions and try to answer some of them in her often hilarious narrative.

THEATER REVIEW
Lab! Theater
"Why We Have a Body"



Running in Playmakers Theatre through Tuesday, this Lab! production

utilizes its four-character, all-female cast and episodic staging of scenes to pose such questions. But amidst heady thoughts of God, memory and Joan of Arc, the play takes off when it focuses on two characters, sisters Lili and Mary.

There's Lili, an insecure and lonely private investigator who's a lesbian. Junior Megan Yaner slips comfortably into the role of Lili, handling her monologues with ease and her emotions with subtlety.

Mary, the mentally unstable convenience store robber, brings explosions to mind. Freshman Deborah Meschan portrays Mary with exciting vigor - executing her bombastic scenes with frenetic energy. Meschan is an actress to watch.

Together, Lili and Mary share the most amount of stage time, making for a genuine look at the dynamics of two dissimilar sisters that are actually not very different. Lili speaks in metaphor; Mary takes everything literally. But it is their memory that makes them seem as one.

Chafee's delicate writing of these two characters, combined with Meschan's and Yaner's performances, overshadows all else in the play. Freshman drama major and director David Chapman lingers too long on his lead characters, diminishing those of Eleanor and Renee.

Playing Mary's love interest Renee, freshman Rhiannon Fisher manages to hold her own with Yaner in some

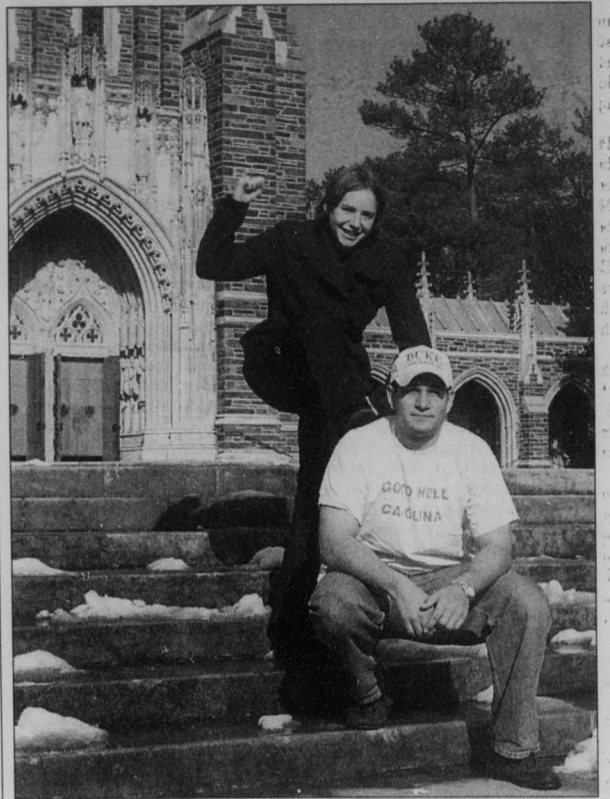
scenes. Mostly though, Fisher turns in a slightly over-played portrayal of a woman learning to love a woman.

And sophomore Maya Rosman's stiff and over-articulated Eleanor could have been a powerful presence. The estranged mother of Lili and Mary should have been an interesting character to play.

The performances of Meschan and Yaner are enough to make this a thoroughly enjoyable show - if not a great one. But Chapman lacks an answer to the question of how to make all the play's other elements come together.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

A BET IS A BET



Student Body President Nic Heinke pays his dues Friday after losing a bet to Duke University's Student Government President Lisa Zeidner on the outcome of Thursday's men's basketball game.

State Tests to Count for 25 Percent of Grades

By JONATHAN MOSELEY
Staff Writer

The N.C. State Board of Education recently approved a weakened policy amendment that would standardize schools' treatment of end-of-course tests. The new mandate requires end-of-

course tests in five courses to count for 25 percent of high school students' final grade in all N.C. school districts.

The changes are part of Gov. Jim Hunt's effort toward increasing accountability in N.C. public schools.

Prior to the proposal's passage, debate centered around how substantial

the tests' effect should be for students.

"As it is now, (the policy) will give children that don't test well a chance to do well during the school year," said Geraldine McNeill, president of the N.C. Association of Educators.

The five courses that are a part of the amendment are English I, algebra I, biology, U.S. history and political, economic and legal systems - all required courses, said Vanessa Jeter, information officer for the state Board of Education.

Previously, schools determined their own weighting of the year-end tests. But the state is now taking on an increased responsibility for statewide test results.

"We hope to encourage local boards to establish passing credit as the mini-

mum requirement," Jeter said.

The move to increase schools' accountability to the state could draw fire from advocates of local district control. "It's too early to give an official position, but we generally support as much local control (of high schools) as possible," said Nellie Taylor of the Parent-Teacher Association.

McNeill said he was also confident students could handle the extra weight of the year-end tests.

"Children rise to the challenge," she said. "They've got really great teachers, and they can do it."

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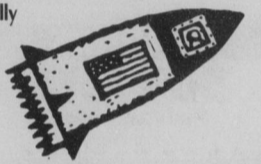
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