

# Playmakers' 'Woyzeck' is truly modern

by Frank Parrish  
Feature Editor

"Woyzeck" is a startling play. Georg Buchner wrote it in 1836. Yet it seems to prefigure the theatre of the Absurd. Buchner's approach to dialogue and structure smacks of Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco and in his own country, Germany, Bertolt Brecht.

"Woyzeck's" story is told episodically. The staccato scenes make it difficult to believe there was no cinema in Buchner's time. Buchner's protagonist, Woyzeck, searches for the elusive, right words. He complains of being "ice-cold" and habitually leaves places when they get "hot."

Woyzeck is lower-class. He is an alienated, desperate man. He would like to tell what the world is like. But he finds it utterly incomprehensible. Woyzeck's modernity hits hard.

Bruno Koch's direction has realized the play's painful potential. Black-outs

occur repeatedly and scenes unfold at a frenetic pace. The play has 23 characters. Only 9 players are involved since some performers assume double roles. Their interactions, comings and goings are consistently graceful and orderly. It would be quite easy for the players to become a chaotic mass. Instead, they rarely get in each other's way and the action proceeds with co-ordinated movements.

The stage gestures are accompanied by equally expressive language. Buchner's rhythmic, forceful dialogue (in Koch's new translation) rings accurately. Koch's translation doesn't depart sharply from either Carl Mueller's or Henry Schmidt's earlier work. Koch hasn't missed many nuances, it appears. The translation is solid enough but his direction, by far, surpasses it.

He seems to follow the original sequential order. Settings then pose a problem for the action shifts, for example, from the Captain's to an open

field to the town to some fair booths and so on. Gordon Pearlman's setting brilliantly resolves the problem. Platforms are to the left and right of the stage. The floor is between and behind are three screens on which black and white backdrops—an inn, the barracks, a domestic scene, etc.—are projected.

"Woyzeck" captures the hectic, furious quality of life. Paul Andre Christianson's music which he also directs, effectively embellishes Woyzeck's futile quest for meaning and the play's overall frightening, enigmatic content. Jennifer Lowe handled the choreography. It is so well-executed that it fits superbly into the play's wholeness.

The play centers around the abrasive relationship between a poor soldier, Woyzeck, and his mistress, Marie. Marie is taken by the Drum Major. Woyzeck, tormented by the Captain Doctor and never really winning any sympathy from barracks-mate Andres, kills Marie.

Woyzeck is a bedeviled man who is incessantly on the verge of going under to an inhospitable world. Skip Lefler, as Woyzeck, has moments when he fulfills the role's dynamics. When the Doctor berates him for "pissing on the wall," he looks truly vexed. As he cleans out his barracks locker before the murder, Lefler catches Woyzeck's ingratiating, pitiful humanity. For the most part, though, Lefler stomps around the stage, looking more like an uncomfortable actor than an agonized Woyzeck.

When Woyzeck repeatedly stabs Marie, bestiality is not apparent but awkwardness is. Skip Lefler undoubtedly has his gifts but they are simply ill-suited for the role. Margot Corrigan, as Marie, alternately plays a "bitch" and a small boy's loving mother. She imbues the part with thorough credibility and reveals a keen understanding of what constitutes Marie.

George Vaughn portrays the Drum Major, Marie's other lover. His arrogance rightly belongs to the Drum Major.

Homer Foll, as Woyzeck's superior, the Captain, gives the part its due in wit and heavy-handedness. When the doctor tells him he is "apopleptic" he addresses the Doctor as a "devil's coffin nail maker." Both men laugh like fiends out of hell.

Jim Greenwood generally does justice to the Doctor. His explosive laughter is matchless. But, as he declaims about "boarding school girls' panties" when he looks into his courtyard, he is too rhetorical even for a pompous physician.

Tommy Cherry, who plays Andres, another poor soldier, is quite convincing. Tommy Cherry's believable insensitivity calls for the restraint and the down-in-the-mouth pose he readily adopts.

Others in the cast who provide splendid support are: Michael Beswick, Faye Hauser, Bryan Jones, Malcolm Groome, Charles Weldon Joyce, Jr., Chris

Rutherford, Cliff Hoffman, Johanna Abkarian, Alison Lester, Betsy Mason, Carolyn Kohl, Patty Hinson and Sharon Coleman.

"Woyzeck" suits the Graham Memorial Lounge Theatre's dimensions perfectly. If the play exacts the proper amount of pathos and ineffable sadness, it is partly because it operates in uncomfortably close quarters.

"Woyzeck" offers a moving portrait of a pathetic creature who doesn't know the answers or the questions for life's adversaria. It is somewhat spoiled by Lefler's faltering lead which lessens its impact. The obvious carnal and bestial overtones are sometimes muted.

Poor Woyzeck doesn't even await a Godot. The murder is proclaimed beautiful. "Woyzeck" is a strange, beautiful, uneven production. "Woyzeck" may not gather laurels but it should command respect.

## Langley review

# Flick fare covers spectrum

The Virgin and the Gypsy—The story from which this was taken does not seem to have been one of D.H. Lawrence's best, but even weak Lawrence is great literature and there are traces of lightness here not evident in "The Fox" or "Women in Love." The adaptation could not be better. The film is beautifully photographed, supremely well-acted, and intelligently put together with a special feeling for period and mood. An altogether superb motion picture.—CH

The Boys in the Band—This movie ranks along with Marat/Sade as the most successful transition from stage to screen ever. Every nuance of Mart Crowley's brilliant script has been fully explored and realized. Acting, direction, lighting, and editing are all of the highest quality. A fantastic achievement. Don't miss it.—D

Fantasia—One of the great masterpieces of art. Its latest reputation is as a mind blower and it is certainly that, but too much has been said about this and too little about the calm beauty of the Pastoral symphony setting or the hilarious takeoff on ballet. You do not have to be a freaky freak or a straight straight to enjoy it. Magical entertainment.—CH

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid—As everyone knows by now, this is one of the happiest movies of all time, done with a real sense of style. It doesn't just play, it bounces along. Katherine Ross is rather poor, but Paul Newman and Robert Redford play off each other perfectly.—G

Tropic of Cancer—Joseph Strick likes to adapt the unadaptable and here he tries his hand at Henry Miller's book. His version is generally clever and filled with nice touches, but is possibly not quite anarchic enough. The picture is mostly successful, however, because of Miller's language, alternating between outrageously filthy and beautifully poetic. There's nothing else like it. Rip Torn gives an excellent satyr-like performance. For the open-minded, well worth seeing.—CH, D

The Baby Maker—When this picture attempts to explore the world of the young and rebellious, it is stupid, cliched and irritating. When it keeps to the main plot, however, the relationship of the married couple and the baby maker, it is beautiful and touching, though perhaps a bit too fragile. The acting is quite good.—R

Joe—This movie is seriously hampered by weak plot development and a very weak

ending. Moreover the laughter in it is smug, shallow and easily bought. Still, the movie is very funny, and sporadically perceptive and disturbing. Joe himself is a fascinating, unforgettable character.—R

Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice—A brilliant script just about goes for nought because of the thoroughly inadequate pacing of the director and the clumpy playing of Natalie Wood and Robert Culp. Dyan Cannon and Elliot Gould are marvelous and their scenes together are comic gems, but they can't quite salvage the movie alone.—G

Scrooge—A rather poor adaptation of "A Christmas Carol." The cast is filled with actors who prefer to try to be cute rather than act. The music is exceedingly dreary and the only thing that one can say for it is that it provides an excuse for some nicely boisterous production numbers. About the only real consolation here is Albert Finney's absolutely smashing performance as Scrooge, one of the best this year. Otherwise for the kiddies, preferably dumb ones.—R

Not reviewed: Dirty Dingus McGee—A western which was rapped practically unanimously by the critics.—CH, D, R

Pieces of Dreams—The love story of a

priest, which most of the critics found pretty grubby.—R

Monte Walsh—See review for Dirty Dingus McGee.—R

Flap—Anthony Quinn and Shelley Winters. If you want to know more, you deserve anything you get.—G

El Condor—An action picture which most critics found hopelessly ordinary.—G

Move—The latest Elliot Gould movie, which most critics found wanting.—G

The Crazy World of Laurel and Hardy—A collection from their films. According to the critics, all their buildups have been cut, and the actual gags are not half as funny without them.—G

## Readers

The UNC Readers' Theater will perform Kressmann Taylor's original play, "Address Unknown," tonight at the Union Coffee House which is open from 8:30 to 12:30. The Readers' Theater recently performed "The Little Prince." It was both charming and intriguing. If you've never seen a Readers' Theater production, "Address Unknown" may be worth investigating. There will be a 25-cent cover charge for the Coffee House.

## Campus calendar

The Cinematheque. Tonight, Ingmar Bergman's "The Seventh Seal." Tomorrow night, Ingmar Bergman's "Wild Strawberries." Both are at 8 o'clock in the Student Union, room 202. Admission \$1. Membership not required.

Tonight at 8 o'clock, the Wesley Foundation will present Fellini's "La Strada." No admission charge, i.e. free.

Morrison Residence College cordially invites you to a Christmas dance tomorrow night at 9 o'clock in the Carolina Inn. Semi-formal dress. Invitations are \$2. The invitations may be obtained in the Morrison main lobby.

The Baptist Student Union will have its annual Christmas banquet this Sunday at 7 o'clock, followed by a special Christmas worship. Costs \$1 for supper. Coat and tie suggested. Everyone welcome.

There will be an important meeting of the Carolina Symposium Interim Committee convening at 3 p.m. in the New Establishment. Attendance is strongly recommended.

Lost: One pair brown-framed glasses near Memorial Hall on Wed. night. Dr. Alfred L. Bell, Burlington, N.C. on case. Please call Tim McAdams, 968-9068.

Alpha Epsilon Delta will sponsor a field trip for AED members to the Duke medical center to view open heart surgery on Wednesday afternoon, December 16. For further information, call Jay Pringle, 933-4725.


An Israel Travel Center is open on campus, according to Rabbi Rabinowitz, Hillel Director. The Center will be maintained by students who have previously visited Israel.

The basic guide for students seeking travel information will be a compendium of "Israel Travel Opportunities," assembled for this purpose by the Israel Ministry of Tourism. The center is located at 210 W. Cameron and will be open all day.

Lost: A large brown leather coat, size 42. Lost at the Pine Room Wednesday at noon. It has a brown toboggan in the pocket. A \$10 reward is offered. Call 966-5060.

Lost: One book, "Personality," for Psych 28 in the Union snack bar about 7 p.m. Wednesday. If found, call 929-3259.

Lost: Brown card folder containing much important identification. Please call Jane Hollingsworth, 933-1755.



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**MIDNIGHT MADNESS**  
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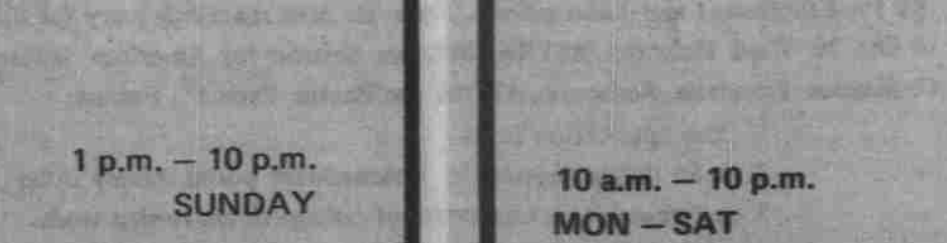
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7:00 p.m.	BOTH ALBUMS BY JAMES TAYLOR AND THE CARPENTERS "CLOSE TO YOU" ALL REGULARLY \$4.98 NOW	<b>\$2.98</b> EACH
8:00 p.m.	A NEW ALBUM BY JOHN LENNON featuring THE PLASTIC ONO BAND REGULARLY \$3.98 NOW	<b>\$3.98</b>
9:00 p.m.	"JEFFERSON STARSHIP" - featuring PAUL KATNER, GRACE SLICK, JERRY GARCIA, DAVID CROSBY, GRAHAM NASH LISTEN TO THE STARSHIP BLOW THE EMPIRE REGULARLY \$4.98 NOW	<b>\$2.98</b>
10:00 p.m.	JUDY COLLINS - "WHALES & NIGHTINGALES" REGULARLY \$5.98 NOW	<b>\$3.98</b>
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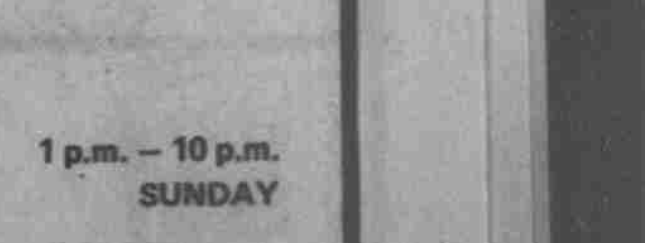
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