

'Good Doctor' is really good fun; go see it

By MARIANNE HANSEN
Staff Writer

The *Good Doctor*, Neil Simon's adaptation of some of the works of Anton Chekhov, opened Saturday night in Memorial Hall, and it was roaring good fun. From the opening blast of music to the final folk dance (quite well-executed, by the way) the play had a vitality and earthy vigor that caught the audience up and dragged it, willy-nilly, into the slightly off-balance world of a writer and his characters.

The writer, played by Jonathan Farwell, provided continuity between, otherwise, unconnected scenes with bits of commentary and by occasionally playing a part in one of the vignettes himself. Farwell has taken a chance and, happily, succeeds in combining his roles as Chekhov and director of the play, a temptation which might well have brought a less competent performer to grief.

The first scene was *The Sneeze*, an adaptation of *The Death of a Government Clerk*. It was notable primarily for the excellence of the lighting and the use of most of the cast in rather passive roles. The performance of the main players was not particularly inspiring, but a couple of them went on to redeem themselves in later scenes. Blame it on opening-night nerves.

Things picked up with *The Governess*, a nasty little piece which could be interpreted as having any of a number of increasingly critical social messages. The piece was played without too much attention to any of them, and Gillian Plescia gave an excellent performance as the manipulative, but arguably kind-hearted mistress.

The performers really hit their stride with *The Seduction*. Kenneth Strong was amusing as the ineffectual husband of the prospective seducee, and his strip from formal dress to long johns was endearing. It was Lyndon Fuller's rather cynical and debauched attitude, however, along with his calmness and willingness to wait for exactly the right timing, that made this scene the most delightful so far.

Capitalizing on this success, the players moved on to *Surgey*, a riotous slapstick piece with an inexperienced dentist and an afflicted nun battling for possession of the offending tooth. The broad visual humor, the impassioned cries of Plescia, as the sister, and the quasi-maniacal mutterings of the dentist, played by V. Cullum Rogers, were hilarious.

In the second act Farwell took a more active role, playing the parts of various characters in the scenes. He consistently was excellent. Where there is no specific mention of him, you should read "praise." He opened after the intermission with Rogers in *The Drowned Man*. Both were very good, with Rogers again demonstrating his skill with overblown visual humor; and a unique sensitivity to exactly where the light was on the stage, an ability some of the performers would have done well to emulate.

The Audition was less successful. Lea McLaughlin had trouble with the physical aspects of her character, relying too much on an annoying rocking motion to signify nervousness. Her vocal interpretation, however, was quite good.

The most touching number of the evening was *The Arrangement* with Farwell as Chekhov's father taking his 19-year-old son to "become a man" through the tutelage of one of the local ladies of easy virtue. The lines



Kenneth Strong (left) and Lea McLaughlin perform in one of the sketches that comprise the Carolina Union-Playmaker Repertory Company's production of Neil Simon's *The Good Doctor*, which will be performed tonight at the Ranch House and Tuesday and Wednesday in the Great Hall.

themselves are classic: "Don't you and your young friends ever talk about such things?—Yes, but we get too excited to listen," and, most revealing of all, "Are you going to go in there and have your first experience with a woman, or am I going to punish you?" Albert Walston, as the son, was most convincing in his reticence, although his physical appearance, too, was not as well-handled as his voice.

The final selection of the evening was *The Anniversary*, a mad little piece in which Hugh Hodgkin came into his own as the banker driven past his breaking point by

women. He was marvelous, as were most of the performers.

All in all, *The Good Doctor* was extremely well done; the technical work consistently good; the acting excellent. Moreover, the moral was clear: just because you don't inherit five million rubles is no reason not to have fun go to the theater!

The Good Doctor plays tonight in the Ranch House and Tuesday and Wednesday in the Great Hall. All performances are at 8 p.m.

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CSN again: a flash from the past

By CHIP ENSSLIN
Arts Editor

The 17,000 Crosby, Stills and Nash fans who filled Greensboro Coliseum Saturday night probably thought they knew what to expect. They probably expected that Neil Young would not show. He didn't.

They probably expected Stephen Stills to electrify the crowd with his sizzling guitar riffs. They probably expected David Crosby to complain about the microphones, which sometimes did not work.

They even could have expected that Graham Nash would chastise a redneck in the audience who disrupted one of the quieter numbers.

But the full-house could not have anticipated the tremendous performance the trio gave as a group, the harmonies that were still tight after eight years, the high notes CSN could still hit and the feeling of *deja vu* that permeated the auditorium.

Crosby, Stills and Nash were back. And they were having a good time.

"We're gonna try to play all the songs we can remember the words to," David Crosby said after "Pre-Road Downs" and "Love the One

You're With." "You're not in a hurry, are you?"

Each man had his chance to steal the show. Each deserved to, but their spirit of unity was overwhelming.

Crosby and Nash teamed up for "Guinnevere" and "Our House," then turned the stage over to Stills to let him do his favorite acoustic blues numbers, "Treetop Flyer" and "Crossroads."

Midway through the second set, the group pulled down a big screen and showed a film of whales gracefully moving underwater, produced by the Cousteau Society and set to the music of the trio. The presentation concluded with the three singing Nash's "Wind on the Water."

The most dramatic songs of the show were those from the original Crosby, Stills and Nash album, released in 1969.

The musicians began the second set with "Suite: Judy Blues Eyes," probably the one song most associated with CSN. Stills played on guitar, and Crosby and Nash shared a microphone.

Yes, they hit the high notes. The crowd jumped to its feet and spontaneously

applauded when the three hit and held "...it's my heart," "...thrill me to the marrow..." and "...be my lady..."

Their next number was "Helplessly Hoping."
CSN built to a climax, beginning with "Deja Vu," from the album of the same name, followed by Stills' Latin-influenced "Fair Game." Next Nash was in the spotlight with his "Military Madness," then Crosby's "Long Time Coming" and finally the rousing finale "Carry On," by Stills.

The band encored with a song many members of the audience had been waiting for, "Wooden Ships," and returned for a second encore to play "Teach Your Children."

"This is a song for everybody," Nash said, introducing that second encore, and Crosby told the audience to sing along. They did, and when CSN quit singing, the audience helped them complete the song.

Crosby, Stills and Nash fans left the Coliseum satisfied. They had seen a *deja vu* flash from the Sixties. They had seen a group with a history of strife and personality conflicts playing together and having fun.
Crosby, Stills and Nash were back.

Keaggy in concert

Phil Keaggy, one of the country's top contemporary Christian musicians, will be in concert tonight at 8 in Memorial Hall.

Lead guitarist for the group *Glass Harp* from 1968 to 1972, Keaggy has since devoted his talents to "Jesus music," recording and performing with Christian artists.

He has cut two solo albums, *What a Day* and *Love Broke Through*. He formed the Phil Keaggy Band a year ago, now on its third national tour.

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