

Comedy 'Shelter' unites diverse characters as community

By Martin Scott
Staff Writer

What do a nomadic bus driver, a silently suffering wife, a melancholy Argentinean immigrant and a totalitarian landlady have in common? That is for you to decide.

But after viewing the comedy "Shelter" presented by the Perihelion Theater Company, the answer to this question will become somewhat obvious. By juxtaposing the conflicting attitudes of these four characters, Karyn Traut, author and director of "Shelter," creates a reality which exposes a fear of society but also a hope for what lies in the future.

As the play opens, these four strangers enter a shelter to escape from a mudslide which has trapped their vehicles and left them stranded somewhere between Santa Monica and Malibu, Calif. The year is 1978, and the torrential rains in California have been causing mudslides. Gathered together are Harold the nomad (Mike Brown), Marci the suffering wife (Elizabeth Martin), Erij the immigrant (Mark Britt), and Kim the landlady and inhabitant of Venice, Calif., (Deb Hanson). As these four characters learn about each other's lives, a unique bond forms by which they become a community, each member assuming a different role. From these different roles, the play evolves and takes shape.

By utilizing flashbacks of her life in Venice, Kim tries to explain why Venice is "representative of America." The audience receives a hilarious, yet sometimes shocking, view of the inhabitants of Venice. From a 6-foot-6-inch trans-

vestite dressed in a red wig and roller skates and called Gilded Glamour, also played by Mark Britt, to the beach belly dance of the uninhibited Italian Camilla (Cybele Kaufmann), the vividness of Traut's vision — the sardonic humor, the good-natured attitudes, or the blatant self-denial — brings out aspects of our own lives.

Kim claims, "The more we understand Venice, the more we will understand America." Not all of the characters agree with her. But through the flashbacks, Kim attempts to manipulate the characters and the audience into accepting her personal beliefs.

Unfortunately, Hanson's portrayal of Kim lacks the vitality needed to capture the audience's complete attention. Though a veteran of numerous mid-western musicals, Hanson is overshadowed by the marvelous performances of Martin and Britt.

These two actors treat the audience to a performance unequalled during this production. Martin's portrayal of the shallow and materialistic Marci is haunting. She creates a feeling of anxiety which permeates the entire stage. Likewise, Britt's Erij delves deep into the soul of any person who has felt like a foreigner in an alien society. The melancholic attitude he presents casts a dark shadow over the lightness of the play, so the audience feels the same uncertainty of the future.

Even the nomadic attitude of Brown's Harold rings true. Though Harold seems invisible at times, the audience realizes that he is fulfilling his purpose splendidly. Brown's soft-spoken demeanor breathes life into Harold that is com-

pletely in line with the character's nature. He is only heard from when necessary, and then he smoothly removes himself from attention only to travel along until he is needed again.

To achieve an integration of the characters and the audience, Traut keenly places the play's action right into the laps of its viewers. The stage revolves around the audience as each member feels as though they are in direct contact with the actors. This close proximity heightens the emotions shared between the characters and their observers.

Live music also plays a part in heightening the emotions of the play. Songs played on a very interesting jukebox (Michael Kelsh and Shannon Dancy) reflect the mood of several scenes. Even the background music (Didi Pearce), though annoying at times, provides its desired effect of touching upon the audience's inner feelings.

Written as a reaction to Traut's move

from Venice to Chapel Hill. "Shelter" captures a diversity between cities everywhere. According to Traut, "Shelter" has taken 13 years to reach a final form with which she feels comfortable. It is projected at modern young adults, whom she feels are "realizing that not individually but by a community effort, they can change the world." She foresees a great deal of potential for the 1990s and also sees young people returning to older ideals. Traut attests that the '80s were metaphorically "a mudslide," in which everyone was bogged down, able to do nothing but attempt to survive. It was this stimulus that intrigued her to write a play that begins in 1978 as the characters enter the shelter and concludes in 1992, when they emerge to find hope for tomorrow.

"Shelter" can be seen at 8 p.m. Feb. 6-8 at the Community Church of Chapel Hill. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$8 for the general public.



Mark Britt stars as Gilded Glamour in the comedy "Shelter"

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Medicine

from one place to the other. And because of my project, I'm going to be more sensitive to the needs of my elderly patients and more in touch with agencies in the community that can provide those needs.

"Medical students could do a variety of things from interviewing people who have participated in (Alcoholics Anonymous), to studying the success and failure rate, to what brought them into the community program," he said. "They could look at how people got to the meeting and found out about it, and how to improve the overall number of people who support these groups. How would you get more people who need this service to get it?"

"I think this program is extremely necessary. It needed to happen. Medicine needs to get back on the streets," Logan said.

And getting back on the streets is just what the medical school is doing.

Since February 1991, third-year medical students' curriculum includes spending a day at an HIV community clinic in Raleigh overseen by Dr. David Gremillion, associate professor and director of medicine.

"HIV care is inefficient at hospitals for many reasons," Gremillion said.

Transportation is one problem. "We were removed from the sites that many patients were coming from." About 45 percent of the patients did not keep their appointments while the HIV clinic was in the hospital.

Gremillion said the satellite clinic reduced that problem to 10 percent, and

the number of patients accepting services had increased 25 percent. "It is more to the patients' convenience than to the convenience of the doctor," he said. "Patients show up more regularly and predictably."

Gremillion said that health was a way to be, not a place to be. "The key ingredient is to take care of patients at home and in the community, because they take ownership and responsibility for their health status. Whereas, at a hospital, technicians and physicians take responsibility for the health of the patient."

Doctors see their patients as human beings in these clinics, he said. "Community patients come dressed as they would in their home environment and may bring their child. Patients come in with social and cultural markers reflecting who they are," Gremillion said.

"When a patient comes to a hospital, she cannot wear the things that define her as a person. We've stripped them of their identity in the hospital."

In an impoverished population, it is dangerous to remove patients from their communities, because their meager resources are dissipated. When a patient returns to the community, he or she must rebuild support, Gremillion said.

Ameesha Pandya, a third-year UNC medical student from Charlotte, said she felt it satisfying to assist her patient in both medical and social ways. "I could see how rewarding it would be for physicians who worked in that setting everyday."

"I think it's something those patients



Geriatric program teaches medical students the human side of medicine

rely on a great deal, not even for the medical care, but for the social support."

The next step involves making doctors aware of community-based health, Gremillion said. "I fear there is a whole generation of doctors who are not as attuned to community-based care."

"I think what you are seeing is the future of medicine. We are on the threshold of a process."

Pandya said she found her morning at the clinic rewarding. "It was very different. I wasn't quite sure where to go. It wasn't in a great neighborhood. I thought, 'Am I on the right road?'"

"It made a difference for me. That morning was the first time I had seen an outpatient HIV patient. I didn't know how comfortable the patients were talking about it or how open I should be."

"Then I understood how important it is to be open and frank, and how important human contact is. It was amazing to me how they talked about their social problems."

In contrast, Gremillion said during his medical instruction in the late 1970s, he studied health care in "hospital-based clinics with patients cattle-carted into a large waiting room until their numbers were called."

"I think medical students really like the program," Gremillion said. Medical students have found it rewarding to have this new relationship with their patients, despite a drop in the financial reward. "Most people are willing to take that trade-off, because it is much more satisfying."

Students taking an elective course called the Ambulatory Care Selective will spend one month in an outpatient care setting such as a doctor's office or Gremillion's HIV clinic. Offered for the first time this summer, the course was made possible by Health of the Public, Gremillion said.

The Health of the Public program is making other new or altered courses possible at the UNC School of Medicine. They include Community Diagnosis: Assessing the Health of the Public, AIDS: Principles, Practices and Politics, the Community Health Project and the Introduction to Medicine course.

Cross said ideally, teachers should incorporate pieces of this getting back to people concept in everything they teach. Medical students come to medical school expecting these issues to be here. "In changing the curriculum, we had to change the faculty to get them interested in the issue."

"The population of North Carolina is going up, and the number of physicians is going down," Cross said. "I think it's still going down at UNC, but compared to other medical schools, UNC is doing better in getting medical students in primary care."

Campus Calendar

- TUESDAY**
 3:30 p.m. UCPPS will hold a seminar about career planning and internships in 306 Hanes.
 UNC Study Abroad will give an information session on Australia programs in lower level Caldwell.
 4 p.m. UCPPS will hold a Federal/State Government Careers Panel in 210 Hanes.
 Curriculum in Peace, War, and Defense presents Dr. Edward Ilt, Deputy Director for International Affairs of the On-Site Inspection Agency, in the Toy Lounge in DeY.
 4:30 p.m. UNC Study Abroad will give a session on Denmark programs in lower level Caldwell.
 5 p.m. La Casa Espanola os invita a "Tertulia" a la Cucina Rustica, 143 W. Franklin - University Square, para tomar tapas y charlar en espanol.
 5:30 p.m. UNC Study Abroad will hold its first meeting of the semester in the SHSBC.
 Carolina AIDS Resources Ensemble will have an interest meeting in 208 Union or call 933-2976.
 6 p.m. The Juggling Club will meet in Great Hall.
 6:30 The Language Houses will sponsor an international dinner in the second-floor lounge of Carmichael dorm. Everyone is invited to bring a dish.
 7 p.m. UNC Undergraduate History Association will have an informational meeting in 569 Hamilton.
 Great Decision Lectures Series welcomes Suzanna Winerholt of UNC Hospitals and Giang Le of the Wake County Center for Refugees to speak on "The Refugee Crisis: How should the U.S. respond?" in 100 Hamilton.
 Peer Tutoring for Econ 10; Poli 41; Bio 11; Chem 11; Math 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 30, 31; Fren 1-4; Span 1-4; Germ 1-4; Russ 1-4; Ital 1-4; Stat 11, 23.
 NC Fellows/Leadership Development will hold a skills workshop in 213 Union. Call 966-4041.
 Writing Center Workshop on writing about poetry in 221 Greenlaw.
 7:30 p.m. Interfaith Student Cooperative will have bowling night at the Union Underground for \$3.
 UNC Young Republicans welcome Senate candidate Gene Johnson to 205 Union. For more information call 933-9504.
 8 p.m. UNC Young Democrats welcome attorney general candidate Sen. Henson Barnes to 206 Union.

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