

# 'Prelude' uses modern techniques to express traditional ideals

Twisted buildings spiral above the PlayMakers stage like trees from a bizarre fairy-tale forest; and for Peter and Rita, the characters caught in this nightmarish tale, the impossible becomes plausible, and it's a longer journey to true love than they thought.

The PlayMakers Repertory Company production of "Prelude to a Kiss" is a thoroughly modern play with age-old themes.

Director Ray Dooley adeptly brought this challenging production to the stage, along with its moral: loving the soul of a person and not just the pretty packaging.

## Brooke Lamb

### Theatre

The repertory company will be presenting playwright Craig Lucas' "Prelude to a Kiss" through Nov. 22. Lucas, whose other writings include the plays "Reckless" and "Blue Window" and the screenplay for "Longtime Companion," first produced "Prelude" in California in 1988. Beginning in 1990, the production played off-Broadway for a time, and it was converted to celluloid last summer.

In the play, Rita and Peter are a young couple in love. The nightmare fairy tale begins at their wedding, when Rita receives a kiss from a strange old man. On their honeymoon, Peter notices changes in his new wife, and after a time he is convinced that the woman he is married to is not Rita, but an impersonator who has taken over her body.

The technical aspects of the production are as good as they come. In a play that involves so many scenery changes, PlayMakers' "Prelude" has it down to a creative science. Segue sequences featuring Peter's narration of his thoughts,

a sliding backstage panel and a middle panel that elevates above- and below-stage make the scene changes an interesting and integral part of the production.

Because Peter doesn't leave the stage during these segues, he makes minor clothing changes on stage, an initially shocking break from theatrical conventions of unseen costume changes. This, combined with the strong language and intimate subject matter of the play, creates quite a different and modern undertaking for the normally conservative PlayMakers company.

Dooley commands outstanding per-

formances from the entire cast. Ken Strong portrays a convincing Peter, an innovative character refreshingly devoid of the stereotypical male baggage found so often in the theater. Elizabeth Anderson plays the quirky and insomniac Rita then deftly switches personalities to act out the eccentricities of an old man.

One extraordinary surprise comes halfway into the play — actor Noble Shropshire is thoroughly delightful as a young woman adjusting to the body of an old man.

Shropshire invokes laughter from the audience as he explains to Peter that

he is indeed Peter's wife.

Dooley said the production presents especially interesting challenges for Anderson and Shropshire.

"In a sense, they play each other after the exchange of souls," Dooley said. "And Noble, who is in his middle 40s, will be portraying an old man inhabited by the soul of a young woman."

Performances of "Prelude to a Kiss" run through Nov. 22. Shows are at 8 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets range in price from \$8 to \$19.50. Call 962-PLAY for more information.

## Military

about somebody's private orientation ... They're wanting to announce it ... and have everyone accept it."

Bob Knight, director of cultural studies with the Family Research Council, agreed.

"I have no doubt that many homosexuals have served admirably and heroically in the armed services, but they did that without ... revealing their homosexuality or asking their fellows to affirm that behavior," Knight said. "As soon as they do so, that's when it becomes a problem."

Knight said that homosexuality was "incompatible with military order, morale and ... discipline" and that these

officers would be hard-pressed to gain the respect necessary for leadership.

Knight also said that life in the military was not to be confused with civilian life and that the armed forces required unusual policies to work effectively.

"The military is unlike civilian life. I have no problem working alongside homosexuals," he said. "I have. But I didn't have to eat with them, sleep with them, be in intimate circumstances around the clock. And in the military, that's sometimes demanded of you."

Citing recent court rulings, Knight said it was recognized universally that the military had to turn away some applicants in the interests of security.

"The courts for the last 20 years have rejected the idea that the military admits people on an equal opportunity basis," Knight said. "They have excluded many ... classes of people without abrogating their civil rights in any way. (Those people) just don't qualify for military service."

"It's not a matter of whether (homosexuals) can do the job or not," Knight said. "That's not the issue. It's the effect they would have on the servicemen if they made a point of revealing their homosexuality."

William Crawford, a retired U.S. Army colonel and veteran of the Vietnam War, said allowing homosexuals to serve would interfere with effectiveness and discipline.

"You see, homosexuals, they tend to group," Crawford said. "You've got these men in a foxhole, and the commander tells Johnny to go disarm a piece of artillery, and another guy says 'Oh no! Not my little Johnny,' because he could be his boyfriend or wife or husband. It just doesn't work."

Jordan said that kind of statement was one of the "bogus national security arguments" used to keep gays and lesbians out of the military.

"I don't think the issue is about that mess in the foxhole," Jordan said. "I

think it has a lot to do with the military not wanting to enforce equality for gays and lesbians. The idea that homosexual people would be a threat any more than heterosexuals would be is ludicrous."

Crawford, a 28-year army veteran and a winner of the Silver Star, said the "pressure and emotional trauma" of having homosexuals in military units would disrupt order, and that the tension created in an intimate environment made it unacceptable to allow openly gay or lesbian people to serve.

"I can tell you from personal experience that there's no place for homosexuals in the military or any tightly-knit organization," he said.

Crawford said his views were shared by most officers in the armed forces.

"All the senior officers that I talk to are not in favor of (enlisting homosexuals) because it destroys the cohesiveness of units," he said. "You might be able to find a senior officer who's in favor of it, but I doubt it."

Madeline Chapman, spokeswoman for the New Alliance Party and press secretary to party chair Lenora Fulani, said gays and lesbians should have the same rights given to other American citizens. Fulani ran an unsuccessful campaign for president during the 1992 election season.

"Dr. Fulani supports the full extension of rights to lesbian and gay people, and if lesbian and gay people want to serve in the military, then they should be allowed to," Chapman said.

Chapman said the arguments against homosexual servicemen were part of widespread American prejudice against gays and lesbians.

"I suspect they are arguments that are fundamentally homophobic and anti-gay," Chapman said. "There's a sentiment in this country that there's something aberrant and abnormal about people expressing their sexuality in ways that are 'different.' I think that's extremely distasteful."

Chapman said charges that homo-

sexuals brought down military morale were "fundamentally outrageous."

"There was a time when people felt that it would bring morale down to have black and white soldiers together," Chapman said. "That's what they're saying (about homosexuals). It's a fundamentally anti-human statement. It's like saying something's wrong with this person, it'll bring morale down to have them around."

"These are the kinds of things that people wouldn't dare say if they were talking about any other topic," Chapman said. "You can say things about lesbian and gay people that you can't say about African Americans or Hispanic Americans and 'get away with it.'"

Knight said arguments linking the ban with past segregation of black and white soldiers were unfounded.

"(Homosexuality) can't be equated with race because race is an immutable biological characteristic, whereas sexuality and the practice of sexuality are behaviors," Knight said. "I know some former homosexuals. I don't know any former blacks or Hispanics or Lithuanians."

Knight said that his formerly homosexual acquaintances had renounced their lifestyles after counseling and that most psychological authorities agreed homosexuality was a mental state.

"The homosexuals I'm talking about ... had gone for counseling and ... had come to realize that their true nature was heterosexual," Knight said. "They had taken on a false identity because they had been told they were (homosexual) by fellow homosexuals. Once they had repaired the emotional damage ... they could freely adopt heterosexuality."

"I think it's a phenomenon that the majority of psychologists in America see as ... an emotional condition that is changeable," he said.

Chapman said that the argument that homosexuals reduced unity by making heterosexuals uncomfortable was

groundless and that the military should be equated with any other workplace.

"What are we going to do? Ban gay people from working? That's what would follow," she said. "It's no different from any other work environment, and people carry out their work. If you feel uncomfortable around people who are gay, then you don't hang out with them. That's life, and I don't know why the military would be any different."

Knight said his organization and many others would oppose any movement by a Clinton administration to allow homosexuals in the armed forces.

"If President-elect Clinton does issue an executive order lifting the ban ... the Family Research Council and other groups would back legislation reinstating such a ban in the interests of military readiness," he said. "It's not because we dislike homosexuals as a class. We just feel that it would have a detrimental impact."

## Campus Calendar

**FRIDAY**  
**NOON:** Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center will be showing "Roots" until 2 p.m.  
**B-GLAD** will hold Lesbian Lunch in 218 Union Lutheran Campus Ministry, behind ATO on Rosemary Street, will hold a faculty/staff/student luncheon with Kurt Fletcher on nuclear physics.  
**Carolina Fever:** Those interested in going to the Duke football game Nov. 21 should bring \$16 to Suite A, Union.  
**1 p.m. UNC Juggling Club** will meet in Carmichael Ballroom. The good weather site will be the flagpole between South Building and Wilson Library.  
**6:15 p.m. UNC Hibel** will have services and a \$5 dinner at the Hibel House.  
**7 p.m. CUAB** will sponsor "Mind and Medicine: What the Fuss is All About" in Memorial Hall.  
**8 p.m. CUAB** will welcome Josh White Jr. to give an acoustic concert in the Union Cabaret. Tickets: \$2 for students and \$4 for public.

**SUNDAY**  
**7 p.m. Newman Catholic Center** will have student mass.

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**  
Peer-Advising Program applications are available at the Union Desk, BCC, Campus Y and 116 Steele.  
**Rainforest Action Group** will have a Rain Forest Exhibit at the Union Auditorium.

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