

The other old Salem



Ilana Anderson

Susannah Wolcott, played by Tiffany Bursleson, announces near the beginning of *The Crucible* to Abigail Williams (Kourtney Vahle) and John Proctor (Jim Frazier) that the girls of Salem are bewitched.

First mainstage play authentic, disconcerting

By CRAIG JOSEPH
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

The University Theatre's Mainstage season opened to a full house Friday with a solid production of Arthur Miller's classic play, *The Crucible*, which continues its run today through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. at the Mainstage Theatre in the Scales Fine Arts Center.

Chronicling the events surrounding the horrific witchcraft hysteria which plagued Salem, Mass., in 1692, Miller's play was conceived in the 1950s as a warning to Americans who were being swept up in Joseph McCarthy's "red scare" on the Senate floor. The university's production demonstrates that this sometimes heavy-handed cautionary tale against intolerance and condemnation still hits home today.

Sophomore Kourtney Vahle, as the crafty Abigail Williams, adeptly adopts many roles in her deceits as a young girl fighting to stay afloat in an adult world of witchcraft and adultery; her well-utilized facials convey fear and innocence to the authorities while betraying her hatred and lust for Elizabeth and John Proctor. Vahle is stunted by an occasional tendency to overplay motivations which she has already clarified, but it is obvious that her Abigail's mind is always working, a constant schemer, even when the action is focused elsewhere.

Strong performances are also turned in by senior Katherine Brewer and sophomore Emily Sparkman, as two women affected by Williams' treachery. Brewer's Elizabeth Proctor is an audience-pleaser, as the talented actress's stage presence

conveys an inner strength and moral uprightness despite the many accusations raised. Brewer's very natural style lends her believability in the trial scene as a woman torn between telling the truth and protecting her husband. Neurotic Mary Warren is a pleasure to watch, for Sparkman most effectively captures the madness, shifting loyalties, contagious fear, and desperation which characterized Salem; her performance is frightening and gripping.

The gentlemen, on the whole, are sufficient but slightly less effective. As John

Brewer's very natural style lends her believability in the trial scene.

Proctor, junior Jim Frazier makes good use of the many tirades of righteous indignation; he is extremely convincing as a man fighting a corrupt village for which he recognizes his own responsibility. However, Frazier's easygoing, realistic style make him seem anachronistic in Puritan New England; one expects less physicality and more staid behavior in dealing with the opposite sex.

Graduate student Trent Merchant's booming voice and rhetorical style lend themselves to the heavily didactic diatribes of Reverend John Hale. Also, Merchant effectively utilizes body language to convey the unwavering drive and egotism that characterize Hale's witch hunts. His motivations, however, are less clear

in the second act, during which Hale begins to back down from his accusations, and he seems a bit less focused.

Sophomore Nicholas John and junior Edwin Howard, representing the religious and legal establishment in Salem, are to be commended for their ability to remain in the action even when not speaking by reacting, responding, and developing in response to what occurs around them. Nonetheless, neither of them emits enough righteous indignation and moral superiority to make their fanaticism believable.

Sophomores Crystal Thomas and Catherine Justice and freshman Selena Williams also turn in strong performances in smaller roles.

All in all, *The Crucible* suffers somewhat from an inconsistency in acting styles—from Frazier's realism to Merchant's high style to some elderly caricaturing—which leaves the audience wondering how to take the play. The cast does a respectable job of portraying the many flip-flops of opinions, but the changes are often sudden, seemingly without motivation. Still, the message of Miller's allegory is loud and clear within a production which succeeds in discomforting and disturbing viewers.

Now playing

- *The Crucible*
- Mainstage Theatre, Scales Fine Arts Center
- 8 p.m. today, Friday and Saturday
- \$5 for students; \$10 for adults.

Klezmer band inspires fans to dance in aisles

By SETH BRODSKY
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

Envision five characters are singing Yiddish at the top of their lungs. They are quite shabbily and eclectically dressed, but irresistibly charismatic; one is praising life in full, articulate voice, one is wailing in wretched despair, another is howling "Oy!" in drunken ecstasy while careening back and forth in a mad dance. And all at the same time.

This is Klezmer, that wonderful Jewish musical hybrid of religious, gypsy, jazz and dance music which the celebrated Klezmer Conservatory Band, bringing in this year's Secret Artists Series Saturday in Wait Chapel, performed so well.

Indeed, as the band began its first number, more than a few audience faces expressed confusion at the sheer multitude of voices and emotions inherent in the music—a bouncy, jovial dance intertwined with the most overwrought and pitiful lyricism of a clarinet, or a ponderous funeral march accompanied by an almost hysterically happy melisma on violin.

Yet this is the crux of Klezmer—a quasi-hysterical, continual "laughter through tears," a potent Jewish testament to life-celebration in the face of sadness and adversity. It is hyper-expression in the truest sense, in that it em-

braces the extremes of emotion not separately, but in one fell swoop.

To do so requires an inimitable virtuosity of emotional concentration from the performers, and the band for the most part produced it.

An eclectic array of instruments, from piano, bass, drums, flute, banjo and brass, to clarinet violin and voice, the band achieved some truly memorable moments of controlled hysteria and intense stillness.

Judy Bressler, a celebrated Yiddish theater star and singer, and the band's vocalist, gave the audience a fine performance of some good Yiddish in an array of wonderfully characteristic songs.

Miriam Rabson, on her electric violin ("six strings of fire") added a wonderful contemporary edge to the evening with some original compositions mixing older Klezmer with more recent jazz and fusion elements, including an utterly swift drum outing from pounder Grant Smith.

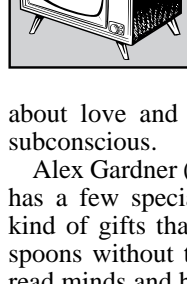
But easily the most extraordinary performer of the night was clarinetist Ilene Stahl. Releasing the truest meaning of the Klezmer, a Yiddish word translating to "vessel of song," Stahl transformed her small wooden tube into a fully animate being, speaking, shrieking, weeping, guffawing and cackling like a bumbling fool

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Film shows early Quaid

By EDDIE CHILDRESS
OLD GOLD AND BLACK REVIEWER

What would you do if you could control your dreams? Better yet, what would you do if you could interact with and control the dreams of other people? So goes the idea behind *Dreamscape*, a sci-fi adventure



about love and murder in the subconscious.

Alex Gardner (Dennis Quaid) has a few special gifts—the kind of gifts that let him bend spoons without touching them, read minds and beat the odds at the racetrack. Dr. Novotny (Max Von Sydow), the doctor who studied Danny's gifts when he was 19, has come up with a new application: with the help of machinery, Alex and those like him can participate in other people's dreams. The possibilities are endless in curing all kinds of psychological disorders. But

others have far more sinister purposes in mind.

The script is predictable and more than a bit implausible in spots (how did George Wendt, a horror writer uncover this plot anyway?), the dialogue gets awkward at times and I didn't like the ending at all.

But something pulls you along while watching this movie that prevents you from turning away. Maybe it's Quaid; he has the same charm that has served him so well in so many other movies, from *The Big Easy* to this year's *Dragonheart*. Maybe it's Christopher Plummer, who is rather brilliant as the bad guy that fully believes he's right. It might even be David Patrick Kelly as the psycho psychic. It probably isn't Kate Capshaw as the love interest; she did better in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, which isn't saying much.

Or maybe it's the peek into film history that it offers. The effects are rather laughable—bear in mind the 1984 copyright date—but visual effects man Peter Kuran does aim high in trying to recreate the landscape of the subconscious. You do see

an early version of morphing (*ala Terminator 2*) that was really little more than claymation at this point. This probably means very little to most people, but to true fans of special effects like myself, this is fascinating historical research. But I digress.

The most interesting aspect of this film is the conflict between the fear of the Communists and the fear of nuclear holocaust. The U.S. president (Eddie Albert) wants to cut a deal with the Soviets for nuclear disarmament, but Plummer is convinced that it would lead to the downfall of the democracy and is willing to do anything to stop it. I grew up with both of these, but the discrepancy between these two concepts never really occurred to me until I saw this movie. Granted, I was still in single digits at the time, but you get the idea.

Dreamscape, while not a very good movie by most standards, still has aspects that make it worth the price of a rental. For those who want to see a pre-*Innerspace* Quaid, a post-*Exorcist* Von Sydow, or what could be Tina Yothers' little brother, it's worth checking out.

Pearl Jam plus politics makes for memorable night

By CHRIS GREZLAK
MUSIC EDITOR

Friday night in Charlotte, tens of thousands of loyal fans packed into the Charlotte Memorial Stadium to see one of the greatest, if not the greatest, rock bands of the decade. Currently on an 11-stop United States tour promoting their latest release, *No Code*, Pearl Jam seems to be on a mission to prove they are worthy of respect, and are not just an ordinary rock band.

I have waited anxiously for five years (since the release of their debut smash *Ten*) to see Pearl Jam live, and this concert was definitely well worth the wait. While the circumstances surrounding the show were annoying (getting ahold of tickets was a big hassle, the parking situation was a disaster), Pearl Jam proved to be all that they are cracked up to be.

On a dim stage adorned with lit candles and a huge chandelier, Pearl Jam opened its set with a beautiful rendition of "Long Road," a mellow track from their *Merkinball* single.

The band then did some heavier songs, "Last Exit" and "Animal," familiar numbers that sparked the crowd's enthusiasm.

Throughout their performance, Pearl Jam encompassed all four of their records. They played all of their songs, as well as other less familiar numbers from other releases, such as "State of Love and Trust" and "I Got It." The highlight of the evening was the back-to-back combination of "Corduroy" and the band's heaviest song, "Lukin." "Corduroy" commented upon stardom as lead singer Eddie

Vedder proclaimed, "I'll end up alone like I began."

"Not For You" also discussed the hassles of fame: "Small my table, sets just two. It got too crowded, I can't make room. Where did they come from? Stormed my room! And you dare say, it belongs to you."

The crowd favorite was a combination of "Alive" and "Porch," two tracks from *Ten*. "Alive" stirred the sea of people which filled the stadium: no one stood still. "Porch," which closed the first set, was dominated by Mike McCready's and Stone Gossard's guitar solos, and a moving speech by Vedder about choice, freedom and the future.

Following a short recess, Vedder returned with Gloria Steinem, a feminist and political activist, who gave a brief speech asking

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EYE ON THE ARTS

Christian guitarist to perform

Mike Burris, a Christian acoustic guitarist, will perform at 6 p.m. Friday in Benson 401. Burris has played at college campuses all over the east coast, including Brown University and North Carolina State University. The concert is sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and admission is free.

Windham Hill artists coming

The Windham Hill record label will hold one of its annual Winter Solstice concerts at 8 p.m. Nov. 7 in Brendle Recital Hall at Scales Fine Arts Center. The three groups featured include Tuck & Patti, a San Francisco-based vocal/guitar duo; the Turtle Island String Quartet, which blends jazz, pop, bluegrass and other musical styles; and pianist Philip Aaberg. Tickets are now available for the concert, brought to campus by Student Union. For information, call Ticketmaster at 722-6400.

'Op art' looks at color's effects on eye

By ELIZABETH GRAY
CONTRIBUTING REVIEWER

A compilation of color function paintings which take the viewer on a visual roller coaster are currently on display in the gallery of the Scales Fine Arts Center. The art of Josef Albers, Julian Stanczak and Richard Anuszkiewicz dazzles the eye with its optical phenomena and sends an overload of information through the eye to the brain, leaving the viewer with a grand headache. Never before has aesthetics so perturbed the intellect.

Through color experimentation and compositional intricacies, the paintings, on loan to the gallery from the collection of alumnus Neil Rechter, provide the most rigorous of optical workouts.

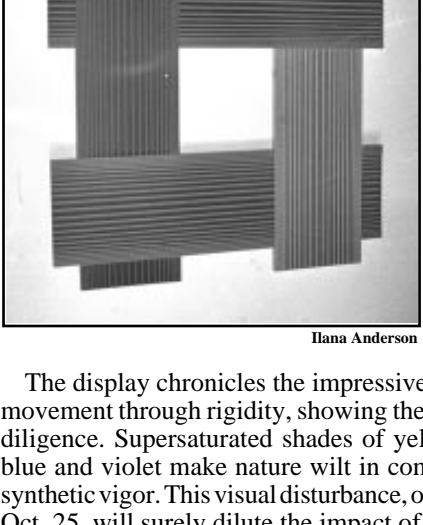
If you look at these paintings, you must adjust to the dizzying effects of the jarring color combinations and crisp lines must occur before the underlying formal and structural concerns emerge.

Although the artists maintain a rather impersonal technique, their non-representational paintings comment on the most sensitive of relationships: color. Contrasting and blending colors conspire to create a world of visual trickery and optical illusions, hence the publicly imposed label of Op Art.

The intricate color relationships is complemented by the intimate relationships among the three artists in the exhibition. Anuszkiewicz and Stanczak were roommates at Yale and students of Albers.

All three limit their subject to light, color and form to free the viewer's response from restrictions, achieving a universal aesthetic style.

The meticulously repeating patterns suggest a mechanical quality while the florescence and artificiality of the colors seem playful.



This color function painting, "Translucina — Summer Reds," by Richard Anuszkiewicz, is on display in the gallery of the Scales Fine Arts Center through Oct. 25.

The display chronicles the impressive achievement of movement through rigidity, showing the delight found in diligence. Supersaturated shades of yellow, green, red, blue and violet make nature wilt in comparison to their synthetic vigor. This visual disturbance, on display through Oct. 25, will surely dilute the impact of fall's foliage.

Amy Bumgardner, Jennifer Bumgardner, Christine Calareso, Mary Leigh Cherry, Marissa Garramone, Curtis Thompson and Terry Tracey contributed to this article.