

Play Review

# "Curious Savage"

by Tricia Wood

The Behrend Studio Theatre opened its doors to thirteen performances of John Patrick's "The Curious Savage." Director Paul Iddings treated the play with his usual compassion towards the human spirit. "The Curious Savage" was filled with perspectives of life that shone with a cynical light on pride, loneliness, and reality.

In the Savage children, money creates such false pride, that all real emotions are blocked out. This causes them to lose respect for their mother, and do not even try to understand her. Lily Belle (Elaine Bass), Samuel (Sal Clemente) and Senator Titus Savage (Andy Bowser), are the step-children of Ethyl Savage (Nina DeFabbo). They speak with hearty Boston accents, that, combined with a few other coincidences, are strangely reminiscent of the "Kennedy Klan." Never having the insight to see past dollar signs, Mrs. Savage's children have her committed to a mental institution for the purpose of gaining access to the estate left her by their deceased father.

Mrs. Savage enters the closed atmosphere of the "rest home" expecting isolation, but finding comfort. She is comforted by the patients who intrigue her by giving of themselves in their concern for each other. Although the patients reside in an atmosphere removed from the "real world," they still manage to reach into the depths of human emotion. They make their own world a pleasant one, in which reality exists only in what they want it to be.

Living at The Cloisters, Fairy Mary (Kathy Devine) exists as an "ugly duckling" shining a perspective of beauty on all that she sees. Her delight in the simplest comments reveals a stark truth; a truth that is pure through her eyes and could not exist in cold reality. Her beauty overpowers that of Lily Belle's who shields herself with a hard core of brittle falseness. Fairy describes her parents as "emotional albinos," because they can't see her beauty. "True beauty comes from within," is realized in the character of Fairy Mary.

Another patient, Florence (Heidi Miller), carries a doll with her which she believes is her child. Whether it is her inability to care for a real child or guilt for a child she might have lost doesn't seem to matter. She loves something that exists if for no other reason than that the intensity of her love makes it exist.

Mr. Paddy (Cyrus Erickson) resides at the rest home as an old man who has learned to shut out

the pain of the world by hating it. The only words he utters are a recital of the things he hates, from broccoli to electricity. He always begins his list with, "I hate everything in the world, but most of all I hate ...," in this way his vulnerability is always apparent. When he tells Mrs. Savage (who alone out of the patients can deal with the mad reality of the outside world, and is strong enough to understand it) that he loves her, he breaks through his repertoire of hating. Mr. Paddy expresses this positive statement only when something matters too much to repress, unlike the world which he had learned to hate for repressing the things that really mattered.

Hannibal (Brian Cancilla) has been a statistician by profession, before coming to The Cloisters. The numbers that come so easily to Hannibal only confuse him by their lack of emotion. So, he seeks to express himself by playing a violin, for which he has no talent. He gives of himself that which he loves, not the talent that others place a value on.

Jeffrey (Brian Chaffee) is a Vietnam veteran consumed with guilt. He feels that "he made mistakes during the war," which he never had to pay for, and is the only surviving member of his squadron. So, he designates his own punishment by always covering an imaginary scar on his face with his hand, to externalize the infliction that others cannot see. He is also a gifted pianist, but will not play for others because he feels undeserving of their approval.

Miss Wilhemina (Ann Dieteman), affectionately called Miss Willie by the patients, is a nurse at The Cloisters. She exemplifies patience as a virtue by demonstrating it. She reveals at the end of the play, that Jeffrey is her husband and her devotion to him is her reason for being there.

Dr. Emmett (Gregory Allen) is a professional whose hands are tied in two ways: First, he is responsible in answering society by keeping the rules and restrictions imposed on the care of his patients. Second, his ability to help his patients lies in the fact that the only way they can learn to deal with the outside world, is by helping themselves. He cannot force them to do so, but only show them the way.

Mrs. Savage finds in these people the meaning of friendship and of caring. The ten million dollar estate that she has prospered since her husband's death, becomes a tool and a burden at the same time. At one point in the play, when it seems that all the money is lost, she realizes that in

using it to help other people, she has forgotten that many things can make people happy; that personal satisfaction can only come from within. When she first enters The Cloisters it is by force. Now that her money (which near the end is recovered) no longer puts these restrictions upon her, she faces the difficult choice of staying within the security she finds at The Cloisters, or facing the uncertainty and loneliness that exists in the "sane" world. By choosing to do the most difficult thing and leave the peace she has found, she gives the other patients the respect they deserve.

"Out of sight, out of mind" is applied to people that differ from the norm. Except for a few strong individuals, most of us are too weak to face the pain of seeing a loved one in a "rest home." We place them apart from our daily lives so we don't have to feel both the respect and pity their presence evokes. "The Curious Savage" doesn't let us take the easy way out: it tricks us into seeing what we usually won't look at.

## Women Have Winning Season

by Tricia Wood

The women's tennis team completed their 1981 season with a winning 7-6 record. They lost to Edinboro State and Gannon University; 2-7, coming back near the end of the season to beat Villa Maria and Allegheny, 9-0; Mercyhurst, 8-1. Last Thursday, October 15, the volleyers pulled through to beat Thiel College, 8-1, under the pressure of an even record.

Although tennis is basically an individual sport, the girls have developed into a team that works together and supports each other. The team manager, Marla Silverman, related some of the events that helped to make these girls a team. Here is one of them: during the match against SUNY-Fredonia, the heat was on the last doubles team of Michele Gonda and Marla. The match was tied 4-4, Marla and Michele had split sets when it started to rain. They

## New Student Union Manager

By Josette Skobieranda  
Entertainment Editor

Have you ever wondered who is responsible for the diverse program of co-curricular activities at Behrend College? Who advises student organizations? What person is responsible for the planning, implementation, supervision, and quality of student organizations and co-curricular activities? Mr. Chris Reber performs all of these duties as Student Union Manager and Student Activities Coordinator.

Chris, a native of York, Pa., attended Dickinson University where he majored in Latin. He then went on to Bowling Green State University where he completed requirements for a Master's degree in College Student Personnel.

Because Chris graduated in June 1981, all aspects of college from a student's point of view are still fresh in his mind. Thus,

Behrend students are very fortunate to have him on the Behrend staff.

After applying all over the country and waiting for replies, Chris wrote a letter to Behrend and was interviewed last spring. He has been on the Behrend staff since July 1, 1981.

Chris is an educator and he realizes that students need to participate in co-curricular activities that promote their overall development. Activities outside of the immediate classroom affect a student's behavior and growth which help to instill leadership and planning skills.

These, in turn, are very useful when searching for a job. Not only does a student's involvement lead to personal satisfaction, but learning theory studies show that a student's involvement correlates with his grade point average.

Much of Chris' time is spent with student leaders, activities, club affairs and the promotion of events. His work is mainly concentrated on goals and how to achieve them properly. These skills are applied by students to student organizations and to studying. These skills are very helpful to life, in general. Chris also handles the Reed Student Union budget and supervises the RUB work-study students. Because Chris is the spokesman for students, he and his talents are very much appreciated by Behrend College students and staff.



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began a tie-breaker to hasten the winning decision. The game and the entire match were dependent upon these two girls shivering in the freezing sleet. Michele approached the fence where the coach stood looking pressured, tired, and cold. "Coach," she said, "can you shove a cookie through the fence?" "Playing for

Chips Ahoy", motto of the women's tennis team. Although that doubles team never got their cookie, they went on with watering mouths to win the match. This and other incidences have combined to make the value of "team" very singular in its meaning to this year's women's tennis team.

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