

# arts

16  
The Daily Collegian  
Wednesday, Dec. 10, 1986

## Movement exercises help actors identify with roles

By JENNIFER EDWARDS  
Collegian Arts Writer

Several weeks ago, three University theater professors were invited to share some of their skills and professional expertise at a series of workshops presented to Blackfriars and Center Stage in Rochester, N.Y. Jim Hoskins, Tom McNally and Barry Kur presented a two-day series of workshops dealing with movement, improvisation and voice and speech on Nov. 8 and 9.

Blackfriars and Center Stage are two community theater groups housed in Rochester. Community theater groups differ from other theater groups in that, for the most part, they are composed of volunteer workers. They are a group of people with a common interest in theater who get together to perform.

About a year ago, Kur, director of actor voice and speech training and head of the performance faculty at the University, was invited to do a workshop on stage dialects for these two groups. This year, he was asked to put together a comprehensive weekend of theater workshops. Movement, voice warm-up techniques and acting were the three areas chosen for presentation.

"It is a basic actors training program," Kur said. "They are the basic skills needed for getting the instrument in shape (body and voice) and then establishing a purpose for doing what you do on stage."

The series began on Saturday with a two-hour workshop on movement presented by Jim Hoskins. This seminar dealt with the body through focusing, breathing and basic movement exercises. "The purpose of these are to release tension and to relax, so the body can become part of what they (the actors) are saying instead of a hindrance," said Hoskins, director of theater movement training at the University.

Movement focuses on how actions should grow out of a character. "As you build the character, the movement comes out. This is more consistent than affecting movement," said Hoskins.

In order to explain this concept, Hoskins used the idea of an actor portraying an old man. Instead of just pretending to walk like an old man, the actor realizes the limitations and physical restrictions of the body of an old person. It might hurt a little to walk fast, so the person walks slower and is hunched over because their center of gravity has shifted. By dealing with these restrictions, the actor learns what the character is really like.

The group at Blackfriars and Center Stage was interested in period movement, especially of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Restoration eras. With this concept the actor must learn to sit, stand and walk in the elaborate, heavy and bulky costumes of these ages, Hoskins said.

Later that day, Tom McNally presented a workshop called "Action in Acting." "This was an improvisational workshop centered on Stanislavski's principles of connecting action and purpose," said McNally, associate professor and coordinator of the professional acting programs at the University. "We worked an awful lot on how the life of acting can spring from a clearly defined purpose."

One of the exercises McNally used in his program is called "Continuous Subtext." "This is an actors' game which requires the actor to find acting choices, which are based on what's going on inside the person rather than just an exterior representation of a line reading," he said.

This game has three basic steps, McNally explained. The first step is finding an action — what has to happen on stage. In order to do this, McNally said, the actor asks himself the following questions: What do I want? What's in my way? What do I do to get what I want?

The second step is to come up with a more personal subtext line to help the actor begin to focus on what to convey. As an example, McNally used the line "To be or not to be..." from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The subtext line for this might be, "I have to choose whether or not I'm going to kill myself right now or not." The actor focuses on this subtext line and the actions and emotions it evokes.

Step three in the game is to get those same actions and emotions from the subtext line into the textual line. Thus, the motions and the purpose for the actions come from within the actor.

Kur finished up the weekend on Sunday morning with a two-hour workshop on voice warm-up techniques. "It dealt with what the actor needs to do before a performance," he said. "It's to remind the actor of what's accessible vocally."

The workshop focused on exercises in posture, breathing, resonance and tension release. "They do these so that the body is in good condition for the performing task," Kur said. He also stressed that the repetition of these exercises is an important part of an actor's performing activity. After a while, the tensions won't come back as quickly and the voice will be more easily conditioned and ready to undertake the performing task.

By commissioning these three workshops, Blackfriars and Center Stage have shown that they are more serious than the average community theater groups. "It's not usual that a community theater takes an interest in training the actors in these basic skills (movement, acting and voice and speech)," said Kur. The groups are interested in improving the quality of community theater, he added.

## Rockin' sounds

The Sharks, pictured below, will play tonight at the Scorpion, 232 W. Calder Way, while Pittsburgh's ever popular Billy Price (the dude with the shades) and his Keystone Rhythm Band will perform at Gatsby's, 100 W. College Ave., tomorrow night.



Collegian Photo/Dan Olski



## The Grinch: beloved author's self-portrait?

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, says there's one character in his books he most resembles — "The Grinch."

The despicable figure in Geisel's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* takes away the presents, the trim-

ings and even the trees from the Whos in the mythical town of Whoville. Nevertheless, the town celebrates, bringing a change to the Grinch's heart.

Asked to explain his choice of who he resembles, Geisel smiled an un-Grinch-like grin: "Ask my wife."

Geisel appeared Monday night for a reading of his works at the Carnegie Building, where a traveling exhibit of his works is housed. In his 60-year career, Geisel has authored more than 100 books, including such favorites as *The Cat in the Hat*, *Horton Hatches the Egg* and *Green Eggs and Ham*.



Nick Cave

## 'Red Snake' heads new music Top 20

The following records make up WPSU's Top 20 for the week ending Dec. 10. Tonight at 8 p.m., 91.1 FM will present the Top 20 Countdown.

1. "Red Snake" — A-Witness
2. "Gimmie, Gimmie, Gimmie (A Man After Midnight)" — Leather Nun
3. "Smells Like . . ." — Alien Sex Fiend
4. "Sacred Love" — Bad Brains
5. "When The Fever Breaks" — Wild Seeds
6. "Motorcycle Maniac" — Three Angry Poles
7. "The Carney" — Nick Cave
8. "Neita Grew Up" — Sex Clark 5

9. "Crack Up!" — Big Black
10. "Don't Go Away" — Primitives
11. "Heads I Win" — Primitives
12. "The Jeweler" — This Mortal Coil
13. "Beverly" — Frightwig
14. "Johnny Thunderhead" — Janitors
15. "I Want Everything" — God-fathers
16. "51st State" — New Model Army
17. "Ask" — Smiths
18. "Another Place" — Mr. Mehta
19. "Real Good Time" — Rain
20. "Mary, Mary" — Mr. T. Experi-ence

## arts forum

### Farewell: Mainstream at PSU should open eyes

By NATALIE NICHOLS  
Collegian Arts Writer

It's the end-of-the-semester crunch once again, with one difference: it's my last. I'm graduating ("say the secret word and win a hundred dollars"), and I just can't wait.

Before I go, however, I can't resist a few parting shots, constructive and destructive, about this horrible place so affectionately called "dear old State" (make me vomit).

Thank you very much to the Arts staff, and especially Pat and Jill and Jeff for being such swell eggs and such fun to work with. If not for Arts, this rag they call a newspaper would be unreadable.

Thanks to everybody who reads the Arts page for giving us a reason to exist. I'm not sure how many of you there are out there — you should write to us more often. Input and feedback are always helpful, especially for something as diversified as this page is! I can't guarantee that what you like is what we want to write about. If enough people are interested, however, your favorite art may get investigated more thoroughly. But be patient — we have limited space and operate under oppression sometimes.

For instance, did you know that there are some people here at the Daily Collegian who don't even think there should be an Arts page?? The arts just aren't important to some of our fellow staffers. Yet the arts are the very record of a civilization, revealing much of its culture. Everything that appears on

the Arts page is not a priceless piece of future wisdom, of course. But think about how boring this paper would be if it just published stories about Penn State football and the Interfraternity Council getting its leaders ruffled by the State College cops.

Since the Arts page does exist, however, the next idea some people have here is that we should be more mainstream. Why not review and write about more "popular" bands, like those in the Top 40? A majority of people listen to and like these groups, so we're told to give the people what they want.

If we wanted the Arts page to look like *Rolling Stone* or *Creem*, we'd write about such "pop giants" as David Lee Roth and Phil Collins. Obviously there is no value in being a duplicate of the mainstream art/s/entertainment press.

Because this is a college newspaper, those of us on the Arts staff have a unique opportunity to experiment. There is so much happening in the "college" music scene, as well as in the alternative, underground, or whatever-you-call-non-mainstream music scene. We have no reason to write about Madonna's latest exploits, since they are aptly chronicled elsewhere.

Besides that, the people at this University desperately need their eyes opened to things like alternative music. The stuff the corporations are pumping into your brains is guaranteed to cause you to accept, even prefer, mediocrity. Sentimental slop like the Peter Cetera/Amy Grant duet, or Bruce

Springsteen's cover version of "War" just isn't where it's at, folks!

Non-mainstream bands are only accepted by mainstream fans when these groups manage to get a song on the Top 40. People tend to reject these bands unfairly because they don't have hits. But usually their quality is much better than your average hit-making band.

At a recent R.E.M. concert, for example, opening band Camper Van Beethoven was booed by the audience. One of the most innovative, intelligent and fun bands around was rejected by the fans of a band that was once just as obscure.

But enough about music — let's talk about movies. X-rated films shown on campus have been a hot topic of debate for the past year or two. Here is a true example of giving the people what they want. Again and again and again.

Within the last semester, I must admit, the porn movie titles have varied more than usual. When I wrote capsules for the Weekend page, however, the same titles came up constantly: *Debbie Does Dallas*, *Insatiable* and the ever-popular *Deep Throat*. Is *Deep Throat* a classic or a tired old curio, representative of how complacent this student body is? The question will remain unanswered, I'm sure, long after I've left.

Of course, there are other movies besides porn flicks shown at large I can only say, open your minds. You need to do it, believe me. Thank you, and goodbye.

To this University's population at large I can only say, open your minds. You need to do it, believe me. Thank you, and goodbye.

Natalie Nichols is a graduating (1) senior majoring in Journalism and an arts writer for the Daily Collegian.

## Filmmakers' exploitation of season runs gamut from tradition to gore

By BOB THOMAS  
Associated Press Writer

HOLLYWOOD — From Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* to the slasher movie *Silent Night, Deadly Night*, filmmakers have long been fascinated with the yuletide season.

The time-worn tale of Scrooge and Tiny Tim may well be the most recurrent of the Christmas movies. It appeared in several versions during the silent film era, then MGM in 1938 produced *A Christmas Carol* with Reginald Owen as Scrooge. In 1951, the English did their own version with Alastair Sim as the legendary penny-pincher (the British had done an undistinguished "Scrooge" in 1935).

Albert Finney was unrecognizable in the title role of the 1970 *Scrooge*, which featured songs by Leslie Bricusse. A recent version starring George C. Scott has become a television perennial as a couple of years ago, the Walt Disney company enlisted all of its cartoon stars for a featurette called *Mickey's Christmas Carol*.

At the other end of the scale was last year's *Silent Night, Deadly Night*, which depicted a Santa Claus impersonator as a mad killer. The uproar from outraged parents was so great that Tri-Star Pictures pulled out as distributor.

Think of Christmas movies and you immediately remember songs. Foremost is *White Christmas*, sung by Bing Crosby in *Holiday Inn* in 1942. It

became Irving Berlin's greatest hit and resulted in the 1954 *White Christmas*, starring Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen.

"Silver Bells" was a little song Jay Evans and Ray Livingston wrote for Christmas sequences of a Bob Hope comedy *The Lemon Drop Kid* in 1951. It became the biggest seller for the song-writing team, who won Oscars for "Button and Bows," "Mona Lisa" and "Que Sera Sera."

One of the many joys of *Meet Me in St. Louis* in 1944 was Judy Garland's singing "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

Frank Capra's unabashed sentiment often resulted in Christmas scenes, notably in *Meet John Doe* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. The latter shows up regularly on holiday television, partly because of its immense popularity, partly because its lapsed copyright allows any channel to carry it.

Oddly, most films with "Christmas" in the title have faded poorly at the box office.

The *Christmas Tree*, starring William Holden and Vera Lisa, was a 1969 bomb. Wrote critic Judith Crist: "There won't be a dry eye — or a full stomach — in the house."

In 1941, Universal cast its biggest star, Deanna Durbin, in a grim melodrama with Gene Kelly, *Christmas Holiday*. Audiences, voted overwhelmingly for Deanna to return to musicals.

Other misfires were *Christmas Eve*, the 1944 movie in which three wayward sons (George Raft, Randolph Scott, George Brent) return to their mother (Ann Harding) for the holiday and *Christmas in July*, a tame satire of the advertising industry by Preston Sturges released in 1940.

The producers of *Superman* thought they would have another box-office bonanza with a big-budget *Santa Claus: The Movie*, starring Dudley Huddleston in the title role and Dudley Moore as chief elf. They thought wrong. The film was the turkey of 1985.

The most successful film about Christmas has been George Seaton's *Miracle on 34th Street*, starring Edmund Gwenn as a department store Santa Claus who claims to be the real thing. The film, which also starred Maureen O'Hara, John Payne and a young Natalie Wood, has become a television perennial and has now been colorized — much to the distress of many purists.

This year Disney re-released for the holiday season the 1955 *Lady and the Tramp*, which features a Christmas scene when puppies are born to the two leading characters.

Other films featuring Christmas: *The Holly and the Ivy* (1952), *The Inn of the Sixth Happiness* (1958), *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945), *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1941), *Young at Heart* (1954), *The Apartment* (1960), *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954).

ANNUAL STUDENT • FACULTY • STAFF APPRECIATION S•A•L•E December 8-23 20% OFF STOREWIDE\* Penn State Bookstore on campus Owned & Operated by the Pennsylvania State University \*textbooks & a few other items excluded

USG / ARHS BOOK CO-OP Better prices! Buy for less! Sell for more! Better prices! REGISTRATION: Sat. Jan. 10 9AM-5PM Sun. Jan. 11 1PM-9PM SALE: Sun. Jan. 11 1PM-9PM Mon. Jan. 12 9AM-9PM LOCATION: HUB FISHBOWL

Gatsby's "The Music Hall" presents BILLY PRICE and the KEYSTONE RHYTHM BAND Thursday, Dec. 11th Advance tickets on sale at Hotel State College and The Corner Room / \$5.00 \$6.00 at the door Doors open at 8 p.m. Photo ID required Also TICKAPOO BRAIN End-of-the-Semester Christmas Party Saturday, Dec. 13th Doors open at 8 p.m. Photo ID required

THE UNIVERSITY CONCERT COMMITTEE PROUDLY PRESENTS THE PRETENDERS WITH IGGY POP Sunday, Jan. 18th, 1987 LISTEN TO YOUR RADIO FOR TICKET INFORMATION WPSU 97 FM