Direction makes play success

By Laurie McGrath

Some plays are so universally known and loved that what a production company does with the play assumes little importance. This is not the case with "The Good Woman of Setzuan," currently showing at Creighton's Little Theater.

The play, written by German playwright Bertolt Brecht, is relatively known. Director Suzanne Dieckman did a fine job in making this show a success.

The underlying theme is that man is innately good, but society corrupts him. The play reveals a woman's struggle with good and evil.

"The Good Woman" is a drama set against a backdrop of the half-Westernized city of Setzuan. The lead character, Shen Te, (Arts senior Delia Haller) is a prostitute who receives a thousand silver dollars as a gift from the gods.

Shen Te uses this money to buy a tobacco shop owned by Mrs. Shin (Mary Arrieta). Soon Shen Te is being manipulated and taken advantage of by her penniless friends.

Haller has the toughest role in the play. Shen Te is a kind-hearted, giving woman who must sometimes pretend to be Shui Tu, a business-like man who prevents the townspeople from taking advantage of Shen Te.

The play is held together by the pivotal character of Shen Te. Shen Te must alternately be charitable and stringent, and Haller fills the bill excellently.

The supporting characters are uniformly good, notably Arts junior Mollie Lawler as Mrs. Mi Tzu. Lawler plays the role of Shen Te's landlady with just the right mixture of sarcasm and burlesque.

The three gods represent the "establishment," religion, education, or economics. They are the Three Stooges, who really don't care if man changes as long as they remain gods.

Wong, (Business junior Tom Moloney), is a water-seller who informs the gods of Shen Te's latest circumstances.

Yang Sun (Kevin O'Connor) is Shen Te's lover who says he'll marry her but seems more interested in her money than her love. O'Connor's best scene is when Shen Te meets him as he is ready to commit suicide. Yang Sun is an ex-pilot and believes that he will never fly again. He is convincing as a man void of all hope.

Mr. Shu Fu (Arts sophomore Vic Labella) is the barber who tries to buy Shen Te's love, but her heart remains with Yang Sun. He is constantly handling money, and that seems to be his main concern.

"The Good Woman" concludes leaving the audience with decisions to make, but not with an unfinished feeling. The author requires the viewer to think and to draw his own conclusion.

The play will run tonight and tomorrow night and from Dec. 10 through Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. The cost is $5 for Creighton students.