Actress ‘switches gears’ for lead roles

By Cathy Nabilty

When Arts junior Kathy Christal auditioned for “Oklahoma!” and “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest,” she thought that she might be cast as the female lead in both plays never entered her mind. However, Christal, a theater major from San Bruno, Calif., will play Laurey in “Oklahoma!” and Nurse Ratched in “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”

“I thought that if I did get one major role I would have no chance at getting the other one,” Christal said. “The characters I play are so different. I’m really lucky as an actress to have such contrasting roles.”

“Although it is difficult to switch gears from one role to the other, right now it’s easier for me to get into Nurse Ratched’s role because we’ve started rehearsals for Cuckoo’s Nest. “

Christal said Nurse Ratched is a professional who likes to control people and situations. “I haven’t quite figured her out yet,” she said. “I think she thinks she’s doing the patients good when in fact she is not, but I’m not sure.”

“Ratched is in her late 30’s while Laurey is only 17 or 18 and still growing up,” said Christal. “Laurey’s a much more likeable person because she’s good natured, fun and likes people.”

Christal, who has seen the movie version of both plays, said she has made up character biographies that add depth to her roles and give her a reason for doing things as Laurey and Nurse Ratched.

Christal said that Michael Weller, who wrote the screenplays for “Hair” and “Loose Ends,” offered valuable advice to the cast of “Loose Ends” when he visited Creighton in October, 1984. “He stressed that attention should be paid to detail and that everything should be absolutely real for you so you don’t just go through the movements,” she said.

“Being in two plays makes life very busy but I wouldn’t want it any other way,” said Christal. “Last Wednesday I had a readthrough for “Oklahoma!” at 5:30 and rehearsal for “Cuckoo’s Nest” at 8:30. It had been a busy day anyway and I couldn’t wait to get home and put on some Barry Manilow.”

Christal said that right now she is concentrating on “Cuckoo’s Nest,” which opens Feb. 28. She said she is preparing for “Oklahoma!” which opens April 18, but that rehearsals will not begin until after “Cuckoo’s Nest.”

To prepare for “Oklahoma!” Christal said she has been working with her voice coach, Cathy Vouk, and going to chorus rehearsals. She said she has also been attending a modern dance class twice a week because she will be dancing in the “Many a New Day” scene.

Christal said that she has been going to clinics on Saturday evenings to learn the Alexander technique of acting. “(Director) Suzanne (Diecekman), who is also taking the class, suggested it to help me improve my presence and composure on stage,” she said.

In addition to her involvement in theater, Christal works six hours a week for the Fine Arts department as a promotion assistant, sings at Gallagher dorm Masses and with the University Chamber Choir, and carries 16 credit hours.

Christal said that learning lines is like studying for tests. “Everyone has their own method, but I use a tape recorder and read the lines of the other parts,” she said.

WEEKEND SPECIALS

Friday: Two-Beef Enchiladas $2.00

Saturday: Chicken Fajitas $2.50

Sunday: Ham and Cheese $1.50

Dine In or Carry Out

Closed Monday