Theater major juggles acting and directing roles

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Reporter

"It's such a rush, such a thrill," says Arts junior Amy Harmon. "There is nothing in the world like being on stage." Harmon, a theater major, will have the lead role in Creighton's production of "Lysistrata" next month. Recently she co-directed Creighton's production of "Buried Child" with Alan Klem, associate professor of fine arts.

"I wanted to be a director ever since I was three," Harmon said. "I was a bossy little kid, always pushing everyone around. I was interested in theater in grade school."

Directing and all the aspects of stage design were ideas Harmon said she had never considered. "I thought acting was the basis for theater and all other things were secondary."

When Harmon became more involved in acting, she said she began to see the real power in theater, behind the scenes.

"It's more than just acting, lighting and stage design," she said. "A director is in charge of every aspect."

While directing, Harmon said she likes to see the entire picture—every character. "Directing you get a vision in your head and put acting into it," she said.

"When I'm reading a play, I don't look at it in an actress's perspective," Harmon said. "There's so much more to a play than one character, when you can have it all."

While directing "Buried Child," Harmon said she used a "theater of doing" as opposed to the Stanislavsky method of realism.

Harmon said this method of acting rejects naturalism. "With the Stanislavsky method, every action must have a motive," she said. "If an actor crosses the stage, there must be a reason for it. This takes a lot of mind work—it clutters the mind."

"Acting is real, it is a slice of life," Harmon said. "This method (Stanislavsky's) limits you. In real life you don't always know why you do things.

"I won't be an idealist and say, 'I'll make it to Broadway,'" Harmon said. Instead she said she sees acting as a degree of luck.

Women in theater have a different kind of job, Harmon said.

"No man can beat an actress out for a part," she said, "but in other areas like direction and design it is difficult for women to be accepted.

"There are the same prejudices as there are in business," Harmon said. "This is a career, a job, like anything else."