After Hours of Preparation, *Bus Stop* is Ready to Roll

HEATHER ORMSBY
REPORTER

When the lights go down at the Interim Performing Arts Center, what the audience sees is the vision and the talent of the play’s director and actors.

What we don’t often see are the hours of creative energy and hard work that go into producing the play.

This month will feature the production of “Bus Stop,” a play by William Inge. Being performed the week of St. Valentine’s Day, “Bus Stop” is appropriately a play about love and its odd relationships.

When the actors take their place on stage, the audience will be transported to a small Kansas town in the middle of a snowstorm. In this three-act romance, a group of travelers wait for the end of the storm in a dingy restaurant. The audience will come to know the strange combination of characters as they search for love and as some are “just left out in the cold.”

But, who are the people behind the development of these characters?

Director Bill Hutson is a full-time faculty member for the fine and performing arts department. He has been teaching here since 1977.

Hutson said that plays and scripts are chosen for production through conferences and discussions among faculty members. He said what he likes about this play is that the lines are distributed evenly among all characters. Each character is developed as the situation unfolds.

Creighton’s theater program is not limited to drama majors, or even Creighton students. This cast of eight also includes majors in pharmacy, philosophy and biology. Jim Wallert, who plays the sheriff, Will Masters, is a senior at Millard South high school.

For weeks now, the cast has been rehearsing six days a week in preparation for opening night. They have been memorizing lines, learning how their characters think and act, and learning how to move across the stage in a way that will push the scene forward.

At each rehearsal, the actors warm up their muscles and voices before running through their scenes. Sometimes they’ve gone over words, lines and scenes for so long that they have to learn how to make their characters natural instead of practiced.

Darra Kingsley, playing Grace Hoylard, is an Arts and Sciences senior majoring in biology with a co-major in theology. She said she feels comfortable being involved in theater at Creighton, even though she isn’t a theater major, because there is a diversity of people involved.

“Creighton has a good program,” Kingsley said. “The directors do not assume ignorance in their non-drama majors. They take talent at face value.”

The amount of time involved in producing a play can be difficult to work around. Kingsley said, “it is distracting because you have to get school work done everyday when you would rather be concentrating on incorporating your character into everything you do.”

The rest of the cast includes: Arts and Sciences senior Jeffrey Bivens as Dr. Gerald Lyman; Arts juniors Ted Lane as Carl and Mike Schneider as Bo Decker; Arts sophomore Diana Sparta as Elma Duckworth; Pharmacy freshman Charlotte Luebbert as Cherie; and former Creighton student Bill Hoover as Virgil Blessing.

The restaurant setting was arranged by former Creighton set designer, Jim Schumaker, who is returning as a guest designer for this performance.

“Bus Stop” will run next week with performances at 8 pm on Wednesday, Feb. 12 through Saturday, Feb. 15, and a matinee on Sunday, Feb. 16 at 2:30 pm.

Bo Decker (Michael Schneider) and Cherie (Charlotte Luebbert) star in “Bus Stop.” Luebbert reprises the role Marilyn Monroe made famous in the 1950s movie.