



## 'Outward Signs' searches for home at the Black Box

by Gary Puckett

With homeless people a common sight on the glittering streets of Las Vegas, Charles R. Supin's play *Outward Signs* has a ring of familiarity to it. This play focuses on the plight of the homeless but also illustrates problems shared by others as well.

This two-act play takes place in an old and dilapidated parish in New York City. In keeping with the plight of most downtown areas of major cities in this country, the neighborhood has, with the passage of time, become run-down.

"The community has changed. We have not," said Whitley Hanerford (Bob May) to the rector. Stephan Bradshaw (Kenneth Umland) as the rector, is on temporary assignment from the church to help the members relocate while the old building is vacated.

"I have one mission: to assist you in your move to your new spiritual home," Bradshaw said to some church members.

From the very beginning of the play, thieves are visible absconding with food while the rector and parishioners go about their business oblivious to the actions of the thieves. Eventually the thefts become noticed and the thieves become known.

These are homeless people forced to steal for their existence. Their leader is Elizabeth Sloan (Gina Torrecilla) who directs them in their struggle. Elizabeth is an able juggler who gets "her people" to perform for what donations they can get.

Stephan immediately thinks he has seen Elizabeth somewhere before. He finally realizes that she was a childhood friend and sweetheart of his. With this aspect, the play becomes a love story.

In his attempts to aid Elizabeth and her people, Stephan is continually thwarted: by her, by her people and by members of the parish.

"I see that God's church is always filled with hypocrites," charged Elizabeth to Stephan. He pointedly replied, "So why don't you join? There is always room for one more."

While this banter continues, the audience becomes aware of Ralph White (Christopher V. Edwards). Ralph, a newcomer to the church himself, is upset that the homeless people do not seem to know "their place." He repeatedly tells the rector, "You've got to make them know their place."

In this statement, the audience can see the dilemma faced by the rector and the other characters. Although his self-proclaimed mission is to direct them to their "new spiritual home" he is helpless to do so. Stephan doesn't know where the homeless belong, he doesn't know where the parishioners belong, and he doesn't know where he belongs. In essence they are all homeless.

Each character in this play is trying to find a way to escape the all-enveloping contemporary phenomenon of alienation. The only reason the rector is any different from anyone else in the play is that he has the responsibility of directing others. The play reveals that he is quite powerless to do so. His attempts appear exactly as effective as the juggling which takes place.

The performance at the Black Box could be described as compact. *Outward Signs* is really a lot of play, adroitly performed in a small theatre, before a small audience and in a short amount of time. In spite of this brevity of time and space, the viewer is left with a lot to contemplate.

## Senior Theatre at UNLV is a 'specialized art form'

by Angela Ramsey

UNLV's Theatre Department introduced a small-scale experimental program designed exclusively for senior citizens. The program's director Ann McDonough said that this fall more than 100 participants have joined to take classes and perform in productions making senior adult theater a popular and unprecedented format.

According to McDonough, not only has UNLV embraced and enacted a working theater program for senior citizens, but it is also the first university that provides training for students who wish to work with people over 55. Creative dramatics for seniors is a "specialized art form" requiring unique

techniques in teaching and directing, she said.

McDonough has followed the trend towards senior adult theater and has taken innovative steps to solidify it into university form. Working on her doctorate in theater at the University of Minnesota, she devised a thesis based on the adaptation of dramatics for older people.

UNLV later provided McDonough with grants to bring her scenario to life on an experimental basis. Soon it became evident that the demand for senior adult theater far exceeded what was originally expected.

McDonough said the plan may become a full-blown program next year.

Performing last season in *Burlesque at its Best* and *Mornings at Seven*, "The

students showed off their talents and proved that senior adult theater is exciting and beneficial," added McDonough.

Sam J. Roth, a retired employee of Summa Corporation and part-time actor, said, "The program helps build self-esteem." Although this most recent acting experience may not compare with his many credits in motion pictures, including minor roles in *Rain Man* and *Midnight Run*, Roth describes the classes as a good experience.

This season, an inter-generational cast of older and younger actors will present America's first major melodrama *Under the Gaslight*. According to McDonough, the diversity of age groups on the production is a welcomed change

and the actors like working with each other. Auditions are Nov. 16 for the show opening in late January.

"Perhaps the school's most representative example of the growing commitment to senior adult theater is its plan to host the First National Theater Festival for Senior Citizens," McDonough said.

In January 1993, 1,000 theater departments and schools from around the country will be invited to UNLV to participate in workshops, classes and performance competitions that feature seniors. The university's goal is to initiate an annual festival that different schools will have the opportunity to host, she said.

## 'Whore' is a brutally honest slap in the face

by Daniel W. Duffy

*Whore* is a disturbing look at the underbelly of prostitution, and unlike other recent movies, this is not a romanticized version of the world's "oldest profession." This film is the latest hard-core creation from director Ken Russell (*Crimes of Passion*, *Gothic*) and lives up to his reputation of shocking the audience.

Theresa Russell (*Black Widow*, *Eureka*) stars and narrates the harsh story of Liz the hooker. While

Russell's acting leaves something to be desired, the honest reality of the life of a street walker is presented in stark fashion. Russell is most certainly the poor man's Kathleen Turner in this film. She conveys the point that for a prostitute, sex is "mechanical" and there is no feeling involved in a blatant, yet unfeigned manner. The fact that there is so much hate involved in a John-prostitute relationship is a major thematic element of the film. The movie itself is very graphic and not for those with a weak heart or who take offense to explicit language.

Benjamin Mouton (*Flatliners*), puts in a striking performance as the pimp of

the year, Blake. This guy is the epitome of low-life and filth. He knows exactly which buttons to push to rob his ladies blind. Indian actor Sanjay adds some humor to the flick as a John who rides around on a moped and has a problem with those "funny little rubber things."

*Whore* has a tendency to drag at times, giving it the effect of being longer than its actual 85 minutes, but its forthrightness makes it perplexing nonetheless. The message of the film is clear though, prostitution is neither glamorous nor romantic, it is a one way ticket to rape, debauchery or an early burial.

Director Russell explains the film in a nutshell, "We did not set out to give a moral lesson to anyone nor to give condemn someone else's values. *Whore* neither glorifies nor sanctions prostitution. It illustrates reality. Whether or not anyone agrees with the film, the fact remains that it did put forward a message: prostitution is not pretty."

*Whore* is playing at the Gold Coast Theaters through Thursday, for show times call 367-7111.

### MOVIE REVIEW

#### *Whore* (★★ 1/2)

Starring Theresa Russell.  
Directed by Ken Russell.

## Renowned drummer to give percussion workshop at UNLV

Rich Holly, associate professor of percussion at Northern Illinois University, will present a workshop on "Techniques and Styles of African Drumming" at 7 p.m. Nov. 19, in Alta Ham Fine Arts, room 200, as part of the Southwest Gas Distinguished Artists Series.

Holly was a founding member of the Abraxas Percussion Group and has performed with the North Carolina Symphony, the Long Island Holiday Festival Orchestra, the Eglevsky Ballet Company Orchestra and the Greeley Philharmonic. He is currently the timpanist for the Illinois Chamber Symphony and the percussionist with the Inner City recording

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