

Provocative, award-winning play comes to Black Box

by Chuck Foley

Landon Coleman's "In Harmes' Way," winner of the National Sarett Playwriting Competition, opens Nov. 12 in UNLV's Black Box Theatre.

Every two years the UNLV Theatre Arts Department undertakes a nationwide search for original plays, and "In Harmes' Way" was selected from nearly 400 entries.

"Love conquers all in an innovative way," said Coleman, describing his play. "As a romantic couple is forced to confront a sudden disparity between their ways of communicating love in steps a powerful figure—

but is this the savior who will reunite them, or their nemesis come to eliminate even their memories of a happy past?"

The innovation Coleman refers to comes from the fact that all four actors play all four characters in different sequences throughout the play.

"It's very difficult and challenging work to keep track of who's who," said director Fred Olson. The use of props and clothing help identify each character.

The four characters consist of the romantic couple—a blue-collar worker married to a history teacher who returns to col-

lege to earn a Ph.D., a traveling nurse who has been hired to care for the teacher and suffers from dementia, and a college professor who is a dissertation advisor and arrives to inform the teacher the Ph.D. has been granted.

Since all four actors play these roles, the sex and/or race of the characters also change. Consequently, the romantic couple changes from a December-May relationship (older woman-younger man) to a homosexual, then interracial one.

Originally, the script called for an Asian male around the age of 40, but Olson said he could not find one to cast in the part anywhere in town.

"I think the play would have been richer," he said, but noted there are still many diverse combinations with the present cast.

The cast consists of UNLV students Steven Horner, Rayme Cornell, Gerry Schooler and Michelle Rodda.

Playwright Coleman, a Tampa native, holds a master's degree in playwriting from Brown University and is a member of the Dramatist Guild. Several of his plays have been recognized for excellence, including "Childes' Play," which won a one-act award at the Deep South Writers' Conference in 1991.

"In Harmes' Way" has

been dedicated to David Santoro who was a fellow theater student of Coleman's at Brown.

"Santoro returned to Las Vegas in 1991 to face death and spend his last days with his parents," said Coleman. "We spoke on the phone frequently and Santoro, in touch with theater right to the end, told me of the UNLV productions he saw and of the upcoming Sarett competition."

Performances of "In Harmes' Way" are at 8 p.m. Nov. 12-14 and 18-21, with matinees at 2 p.m. on Nov. 15 and 22. Tickets are \$5 and are available at the Performing Arts Center box office.

interview

One lump or two?



High tea with Thor, bassist of The Sugarcubes

by Brent Legault

A heavy sigh, a stifled yawn, and a weary "Hello?" greeted me when Thor, The Sugarcubes' bassist, agreed to do yet another interview for yet another publication.

Was it duty? (No, it was just me.)

"I have a list of questions. The typical who's, why's and what's, you know?"

"I know," replied Thor.

After eight days on tour, this must have been his 10th? 20th? 50th? interrogation. Apparently, there has been plenty of time for talking on the phone. Although Thor likes tours to move at a quicker pace, a tour this size requires so much stage equipment there is usually a two or three-day wait between performances. The Sugarcubes are allotted only a half hour of play, or, as Thor says, "About 10 songs."

"What tour?" you naively ask. Why, the Zoo TV extravaganza, of course. U2 drives the bus on this tour, but The Sugarcubes, along with Public Enemy share the gas money.

So how do The Sugarcubes rate opening up for the Celtic

mega-selling soulsters?

Earlier this year, the Sugarcubes scored a Top-40 hit, with their prophetically titled single, "Hit." A very surprising twist in the career of a band whose first two albums saw heavy airplay on college radio, but commercial stations chose to pass over.

"We decided we should make pop music like it should be," said Thor.

They succeeded, not only artistically, but financially. Thor snickered when I casually mentioned that some of the fans of their early material think that perhaps, just maybe, there was a slim chance that The 'Cubes may have "sold out".

Thor answered my question with a question, "What's the use of putting out an album like the first?"

This philosophy is evident with a quick perusal of their three album catalog. *Life's Too Good* is rough, spirited and soulful. *Here, Today, Tomorrow, Next Week* is insane and chaotic, while *Stick Around For Joy* is somewhat relaxed and over-produced.

If you find those brief descriptions as arbitrary and meaningless as I do, then perhaps it will help if I tell you The Sug-

arcubes incorporate varied styles of music into their unique sound. Their influences range from English pop to South American pop, as well as classical and traditional forms of music.

Like Thor says, "People are bored, hearing the same songs over and over."

The Sugarcubes proved this by attaining commercial airplay. Instead of changing (selling out) to conform to an existing market, the market, in this case the American audiences, changed (got bored enough) to accommodate the success of an unusual pop band.

Ah, success! It allows one the time to do so many things. To accompany U2, even though *Stick Around For Joy* was released over six months ago. Bjork, the lead vocalist, has time to work on a solo project. Thor has time to write poetry and children's books. The other four band members fill their spare time with whatever projects they see fit.

So now, my hands sweat. My collar, hot and sticky, scratches my neck. My throat tightens, drying out, quivering. Scanning my question list, I see there is one I have avoided. A question Thor has heard a million times.

Dare I ask? Will he hang up the phone? The moment, however, is ripe.

"There are rumors that The Sugarcubes are, uh, breaking up. Are they true?"

I heard a moan, the sound of a fist striking a table, then silence. A heavy sigh. A stifled yawn.

Thor said rumors are rumors. The Sugarcubes always take time off in-between albums. It gives the band some breathing room. Space to work on their own agendas.

"We've always had these little escape routes, our private projects," said Thor. Any official break-up will be formally announced.

So 'Cubes fans can rest their fears for awhile. People who aren't fans, but want to be, should also relax. This band will very likely stick around for a long time. They have the talent, the verve, and all those other necessary noun/adjectives it takes to make it in the music business.

So give Thor something to do. Go to the concert at the Silver Bowl tonight at 7 p.m. I bet they don't sigh or yawn even once.