

# 'Raspberry Rafter:' Entertaining Excursion

BY THOMAS LEE

"Raspberry Rafter '73," an original Citamard revue, proved to be an entertaining excursion into the minds and talents of some of Millersville State College's more successful playwrights, actors, and directors.

Any advocate of the entertainment cum message school of theater (well, when you think about it, everything has a message) had a grand time, as did those who came looking for no more than an entertaining evening.

All the pieces fit into place and the slips in professionalism usually found in revues of this type were gratefully absent.

The first half of the program showcased the dramatic efforts of authors Clayton R. Martin III, Marjorie J. Birch, Murray Mall, and Harry H. Long. Ms. Birch's Albee-esque diatribe against mom-ism and the drawbacks of a cramped home life, "This End Up," was a gloriously bittersweet 20 minutes of surrealistic comedy-drama.

A heavy-handed conclusion almost spoiled the spirit of the play, but the mama's mechanical chirps of pre-recorded affection provided a chillingly effective ending.

Long's "Naked Dream" concerned a fatal probe into the psyche of an ancient, boozing

actress, a perennial bitch who eventually did herself in during a memoir dictating session.

The scribe assigned to take down her reminiscences sat stony-faced, writing down every word, even those never intended for the fading starlet's autobiography.

Enid, the actress, goes down in the great "Sunset Boulevard" tradition, under the hateful gaze of the silent, tormenting scribe.

Playwrights Mall and Martin deserve a few razzberries, however, for their lifeless bits of drama. Martin's "A Visitation in Late December" contained an interesting premise, that of an injured construction worker left alone during the Christmas holidays and visited only by the woman next door and an old friend from the company.

This maudlin slice of life slowly evolved into a grotesque view of pity toward an unfortunate cripple.

Mall's "Sans End" was no more than low grade soap-opera, though well played by Ute Weiss and Al Smith.

All four of the dramatic casts were excellent, doing full justice to the superb "This End Up" and "Naked Dream," or trying to salvage some interest out of "Late December" or "Sans End."

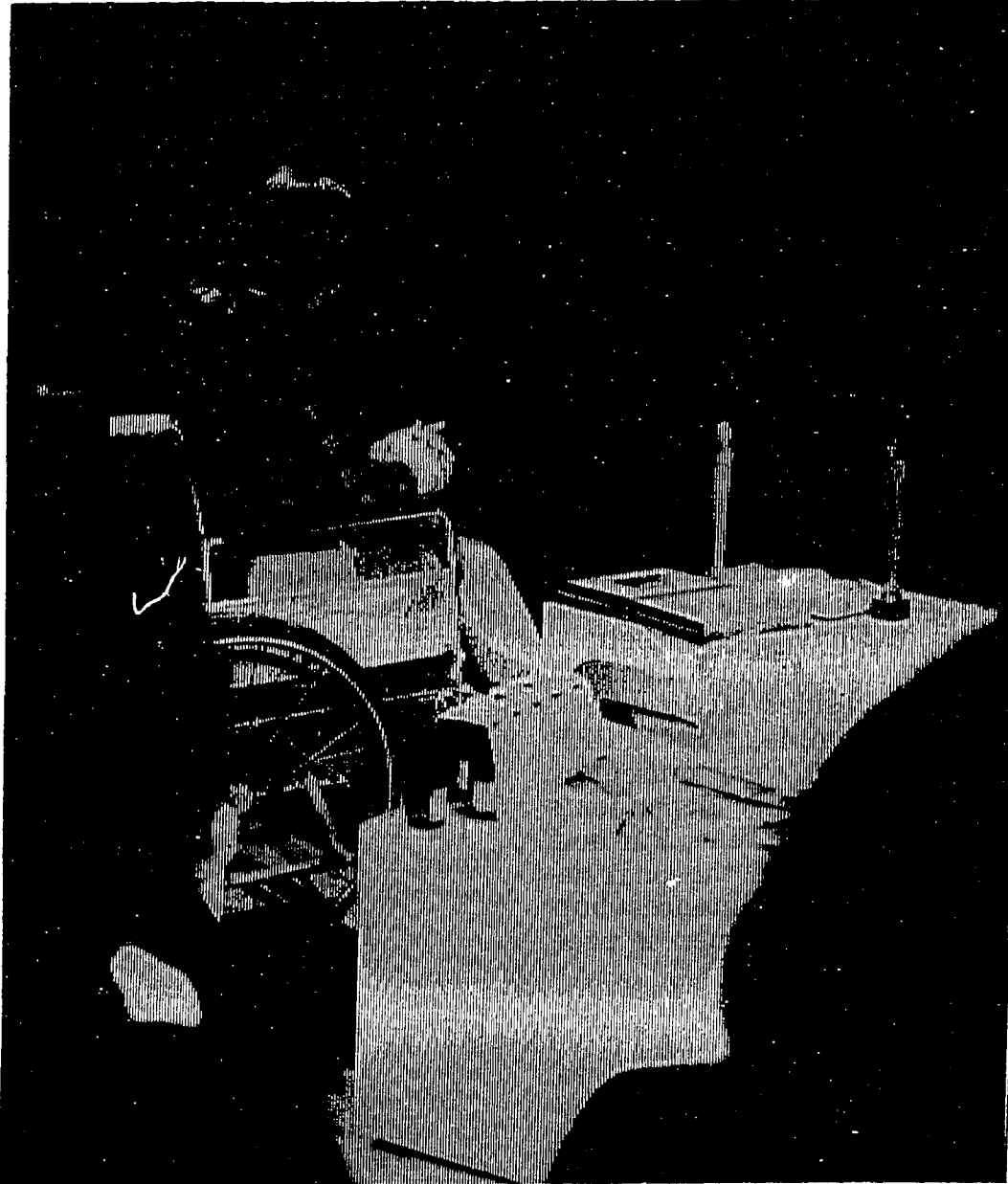
Notable among these players were Lee Jennings as the crippled worker, Pat Frazier, Diane Laws, Judy Churach, Bob Collins (all of "This End Up"); and Margie Toomey as "Naked Dream" Enid, a bravura performance.

A hard working cast and a more than ample supply of good, fast-paced humor attributed to the second half of the evening, "The Comedy Revue."

Zippering in and out of various costumes and characterizations, running, tumbling, singing, and wielding props at a faster-than-light pace, the cast kept the audience in constant fits of laughter.

With topics ranging from boring professors to idiotic television shows and including psychiatrists, death, weddings, homosexuality, spies, etc., playwrights Mike White, Judy Powell, Paul De Santis, Matthey Thomas, Murray Mall (here in better form), Carl G. Barnhardt, Steve Alexander, Judy Churach, and Patricia Knispel perfectly balanced out the heavier aspects of the first part of the evening.

"Revue" directors Paul De Santis and Harry H. Long were responsible for the evening's smooth flow and contributed their separate talents to the first act dramas.



LEE JENNINGS portrays the injured construction worker Boyle in "A Visitation in Late December", written by Clayton R. Martin, III. This play was one of four original dramas presented last weekend in Citamard's production of "Raspberry Rafter '73."

(Photos by Lanny Morgnanesi)