

Poetry collection aims to help homeless

By Anthony R. Ashley
Arizona Daily Wildcat

Are you one who can be easily brought into submission? No, this is not an in-depth story about the latest in adult leather wear.

The submission is, instead, a poetic one. If you can write poetry and would like for your work to go toward a good cause, you may be in luck.

Gloria McMillan, Pima Community College writing teacher and first-time editor, has started accepting poems on the theme, "A Child in the Arizona Sun," for a book to be published with the proceeds benefiting Tucson's homeless population.

The book, sponsored by McMillan herself, was conceived after her fellow Internet colleagues gave her the idea by "always talking about their 'chat books,'" she said.

Chat books are books written

by McMillan's colleagues, she said.

McMillan said she wanted to do a book instead of a benefit dinner, because she is a writing teacher and decided to put "one together to see if it could help" the cause of homelessness.

McMillan said she is accepting "enough (entries) to fill the book," and she "wouldn't turn one away."

Currently McMillan has received about 17 to 18 poems that are "uneven in quality" from Tucson, as well as others from as far as Montreal.

She is expecting at least 40 or more poems, along with 20 to 30 accompanying drawings, before the deadline of Oct. 30.

The theme came to McMillan in July, after she heard a news report on the radio about families living in cars, she said.

McMillan said these families, with a fear of separation from

state agencies, would not go to a shelter. Instead of being taken away from each other, they would rather be in a car all day.

McMillan thought of what it would be like to be the child in this situation, and that's when the theme came to mind, she said.

Proceeds from the book may be split between the Primavera Foundation and Casa Maria if the books sell a significant amount, McMillan said.

If the books sells a small amount, the proceeds "may go to one" instead, she said.

McMillan is expecting a "mixture of stuff" to come in, as far as styles of writing.

She said the poems do not have to be a certain length, and anyone can submit a poem, from long forms to haiku.

So far, McMillan has received many submissions from the older members of Tucson's community, but thinks it would

"be nice to have the younger people" send in writings.

McMillan is trying to get many people from Tucson involved with her book, including Otis Bronson, head of the Writing Department at PCC, and the University of Arizona art and photography departments and its students for the book's art.

She said with expected costs, the book should be out by the end of the year. If the costs exceed those currently projected, a benefit concert will be held, pushing the release date to the spring of 1997.

The book will be sold exclusively in the Tucson area at local bookstores, like Antigonio Books, 411 N. Fourth Ave., and The Book Mark, 5001 E. Speedway Blvd., McMillan said.

If you would like to submit a poem to McMillan's book, or have any other questions, call 623-8905 for more information.



TAMITH L. BALABAN/Arizona Daily Wildcat

Gloria McMillan, compiler of "A Child in the Arizona Sun."

Play lacks staying power, falls flat

Arizona Repertory Theatre's "You Can't Take It With You" closes this weekend at UA's Laboratory Theatre. Call 621-1162 for tickets and info.

By Leigh E. Rich
Arizona Summer Festival

While Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman's "You Can't Take It With You," the Arizona Repertory Theatre's current production, inundates audiences with a ration of good-natured farce and tomfoolery, its *carpe diem* thematic element and concomitant love story fall flat.

This is not altogether due to the abilities of Hart and Kaufman, two American playwrights who had their heyday following the Depression; nor is it a measure of the Arizona Repertory Theatre and its usual consistency of talent. The play's triteness and lack of tension, rather, stem mainly from its story line, one that has been rehashed and "Hollywoodized" over the past century.

"You Can't Take It With You" tells the familiar narrative of "boy meets girl from the wrong side of the tracks who is afraid her unique and downright bizarre family won't mesh with his refined and rich papa." Perhaps fresh and controversial for a theatergoer in the '30s, today's audience is all too acquainted with renditions of the *Romeo and Juliet* scenario. Sticks a fork in this plot line and turn it over, because it is done. And it has been done before. Sometimes with a side of corn, sometimes a side of peas...

Hart and Kaufman's version involves the zany relations who comprise the Sycamore household, set in New York City in 1936. The Sycamores — an Addams Family-esque lot — are happy and content in their eccentricity. Grandpa Vandorff refuses to believe in the income tax or any form of the Protestant work ethic; mother Penny expresses her artistic talents (or lack thereof) through writing and painting simply because the tools of the media exist in the house; and father Paul, in cahoots with perpetual houseguest Mr. De Pina, ventures through the joys of gunpowder.

And all those who stumble across the Sycamore squall find themselves sucked into a vortex of fun and gaiety, never to

return to the world which demands one dots his "I"s and crosses his "Y"s.

For those looking in from without, the only kinsman seemingly sane is Alice, recently engaged to her boss son, Tony — the product of an enduring Wall Street legacy. Of course, antics abound when the in-laws meet in a scene where Hart and Kaufman struggle to (and never quite) reach a comedic critical mass.

An audience in the '30s probably found this play a bit outlandish, pushing the norms of impropriety. Alice, a young woman who works in an office, stays out until wee hours of the morn with her gentleman caller; the Sycamore household itself consists only of play and excludes all work; and the theme — "it's better to be happy than to be rich" — seems precarious in an era just crawling out of the depths of the Depression.

The playwrights' pandemonium borders between hilarity and heresy. Regardless, it is a reminder of all that is great about America, the (theoretical) melting pot of individuality, equality, and "pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps" success stories.

Despite all this, however, the play lacks a staying power found in works like those by Shakespeare, Ibsen and Tennessee Williams, whose ingenious writing and profound themes transcend time periods and sometimes even cultures.

With regards to "You Can't Take It With You," the love affair between Alice and Tony is trite, lacks passion, and is overshadowed by the antics of the supporting characters. The farcical elements, provided almost solely by the Sycamores' house servant Rheba and their daughter's Russian dance instructor, are amusing and entertaining. Dumber than a sack of hammers, even son-in-law Ed helps to carry the comedy. And the overdone "man in a dress gag" still manages to get a good guffaw.

Regardless of the familiarity to it all and despite the play's weight of depth, today's audiences will still enjoy this show. But don't search for anything below the surface — like the silver screen and modern television, "You Can't Take It With You" upholds the delusion that life's problems can be solved within the half hour.

Music Review

By Tim DAVIS
Arizona Daily Wildcat



After nearly two years and an extensive tour of international medical facilities, R.E.M. returns with yet another album, *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*. It's pretty OK. R.E.M. is a band that people should recognize by now as being an indisputable member of the current popular music canon, placed alongside other bands that are indisputably pretty OK, and definitely a cut above the normal KPMIA darlings.

No segue here, on to the review. *New Adventures in Hi-Fi* succeeds on better terms than R.E.M.'s last four albums, but is by no means the band's magnum opus. Chock full of decent midtempo numbers and sprinkled with a few gems and one or two turds, the best part of the album is the first half. In the first nearly flawless eight songs, you'll find the single "How the Letter" (featuring the always extraneous Pat Smith), "The Wake Up Party" — the best R.E.M. song in a long time — and "Leave," the album's longest track clocking in at seven and a half minutes. The problem is that only a couple of these songs are under five minutes, and I found myself ready for the closing song about four songs early.

After the halfway point, R.E.M. ceases to make a good new album, and resorts to stealing hits from the past, or in the case of "So Far So Numb" — stealing a top band that have stolen from early R.E.M. albums. The last six songs, with brief exceptions, are forgettable fodder for the B sides of singles. The song titles are, as always, obscure and fit to be bad high school bands after (Binky the Doodman appearing with Zither and New Test Exper at Cafe Luna Loca, admission three dollars at 600¢), and the packaging is naturally sparse and enigmatic.

R.E.M. has more or less spent its career being a good band, and *New Adventures* is no exception. However, the boyz is past and it is doubtful we'll ever see anything like *Fables of the Reconstruction* or *Murmur* again. If you're a casual fan, this is certainly not the album to own, unless of course it's between this and Dishwall.

Southern bridesmaids turn in hilarious, bonding experience

"Five Women Wearing the Same Dress" by Alan Ball and presented by Borderlands Theater has continued its run in the PCC West Black Box Theatre through Sept. 15. Call 624-6988 for tickets and information.

Leigh E. Rich
Arizona Daily Wildcat

Life is like a bad wedding.

The preparations are interminable, negotiations between parties are draining, and infinitesimal decisions can escalate into international skirmishes — all of which cumulates into one fleeting joyous occasion comprised of acquaintances loitering about in pinching shoes and gaudy outfits priced just beyond realistic financial means.

While everyone struggles to keep a tight lid on personal opinions, most leave a little heavier, a touch lonelier, and perhaps a bit tanked-up.

Within this cynical view of an enduring cultural tradition, however, playwright Alan Ball manages to find a lot of laughs and a little insight in his "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress," a play about marriage, love, sex and intimacy told from the bridal party sidelines.

Wrapping up its final weekend through the Borderlands Theater, "Five Women" is set in the Southern clime of Knoxville, Tenn. — chock full of debutantes, religious zeal, Southern comfort, and unchanging intolerance.

Ball intentionally throws together five women who couldn't be more different than they are

similar.

Virginal Frances (Aleta Palmer) struggles to maintain her Christian values as she hides away from her cousin's wedding reception with irate idealist Meredith (Sara Eileen LaWall), the buxom and bawdy Trisha (Caroline Reed), a middle-aged debutante (Suzi List), and a neurotic-klutz-lesbian (Elizabeth Heichelbach).

A play both written and directed by men, Ball's bridesmaids are anything but the typical caricature of caddy women. While the dresses are as flattering as a Don King hairdo, these women are draped in a realistic softness.

Ball addresses the issues of today — not in an overtly preaching fashion, but rather with comedic and unutilized sensitivity.

Ball is able to explore, through this Twain-esque style, a feminine take on men, age, AIDS, sex, marriage, love, and sexuality.

He manages to deconstruct traditional sacrosanct institutions ("a wedding is like a sacrifice"), condemn religious intolerance, and reflect on modern American "culture." In essence, Ball reeks of an anthropologist and, because of it, is able to make light of as well as provide insight into our daily struggles as sexual and

gregarious creatures.

Of course, this play is not for the estrogen-weary. The bridesmaids' gathering resonates most female conversations: they are 90 percent about men. As one chignon-laden lass asks the other, "Why are men so stupid?" The answer, "Because they're allowed to be."

But Ball's dialogue is not all about cultivating that inner bitch. He delves beneath the surface in an attempt to understand Woman from his male perspective. The women, like most, search for something other than what they've already found — all flash and no substance. As Georganne poignantly puts it, "I've never met a man who looked at me and saw more than his own ego."

Most importantly, however, "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress" indulges in a dialogue about friendship and intimacy, accepting one another despite differences and supporting one another in times of need.

Ball's remarkably well-devised modern comedy is really his twisted take on stability and loneliness. The former we all crave; the latter we all have.

Perhaps it is a human condition to fear waking up one day and realizing your life hasn't necessarily been all that you hoped it would be — a particularly keen and simple insight expounded upon by women garbed in questionable duds.

On a more optimistic side, however, Ball convinces us that some things in life are gifts. Ball's "Five Women" is one of them. Guaranteed you'll be in stitches by the time this wedding reception is over.

At left, the bridal party (from l to r): Suzi List, Elizabeth Heichelbach, Sara Eileen LaWall, Caroline Reed, and Aleta Palmer. Photo courtesy of Borderlands Theater.

