

## DIM, YOUNG AND RESTLESS

More than the usual open mind is required for a viewing of *Bright, Young and Fresh*, the dramatic sampler now playing at the Cabrillo College Theater. Patience, tolerance and stamina are also advisable, since the audience's endurance (as well as its support) is in high demand. A series of 10 short original plays (divided into two alternating programs), *Bright, Young and Fresh* is a lengthy onslaught of uneven merit—glimmers of talent do arise, but the overall impression is a dim one.

Of the five pieces in "Program A," only one and a half of them give the audience anything to care about, be involved in or even entertained by, although a reliable source has recommended a strong three out of "Program B." The fact remains that sitting through five plays, no matter how short, places such a demand on the sensibilities of the viewer that the plays themselves can in no way benefit from the crowded conditions. Both format and content are a problem with *BYF*; there are too many plays squeezed onto each program and simply not enough good ones.

Of notable disregard are: *Omelet*, a wretched parody of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* featuring Ophelia as a valley

girl and a stable of stilt jokes; *When Secrets End*, a juvenile melodrama between two amateurish actresses, and *Of Dreams and Beer*, a self-aggrandizing slice of life that, aside from some amusingly colorful minor characters, has the one virtue of brevity. Showing potential is the eerie contribution *Joyride*, written by Maurizio Marmorstein. Reminiscent of old *Twilight Zone* scenarios, this strange little play is both engrossing and disturbing though noticeably marred by melodrama at its crisis point. A young delinquent (Michael Chappellear) fritters his life away hanging out on street corners, testing the limits of his morality with Russian roulette and playing dangerous games in speeding cars. An uncanny stranger (Paul Henning) appears, throwing the play into a time warp of cyclical identity and empty recurring life patterns as the lives of the two men are discovered to be bizarrely entwined. Unfortunately, all the groaning and screaming that goes on towards the end seems fairly unnecessary; the same urgency could be expressed just as forcefully without the hysteria.

The outstanding effort of the program is by far *The Doom Folk* by Gary Aylesworth. A compelling mixture of

fantasy/spirituality and real human drama, director Leonard Maestas takes what was originally a one-man show and turns it into a rich theatrical venture. The *Doom Folk's* ambitiously creative script is supplemented by the fine acting skills of James Rummonds in the leading role of Gary, a 34-year-old man seeking a relationship with his birthmother. Funny, sensitive and comfortable on stage, Rummonds gives a thoroughly engaging performance. As his birthmother, Meg Harlor is suitably stiff and bewildered while the graceful and bejeweled Angelle Walker makes a few tantalizing appearances as the Goddess and the high-energy antics of guardian angel Chris Risse inject the show with comic/cosmic relief. All in all, except for a slight sense of dragging just before the end, *The Doom Folk* is as close to a professional production as "program A" of *Bright, Young and Fresh* presents, and of the rest, is most deserving of a solo run.

—Valerie Ross

*Bright, Young and Fresh* plays Friday (Program B) and Saturday (Program A) at 8pm and Sunday (Program B) at 2pm at Cabrillo College Theatre.