

Bonstelle captures playwright's mood

By JEFF SCHORR

Tennessee Williams, the playwright of the south, has one of his favorite characters on display in a well-done production at Wayne State University's Bonstelle Theater.

"The Eccentricities of a Nightingale," the critically acclaimed rewrite by Williams of his early play "Summer and Smoke" is an examination of people in a small, southern town and the influence culture plays on character development — typically Williams.

Alma Winemiller, the principal figure, played by Kim Cook, is a highly affected, overwrought sensitive young woman who sings in the church choir and coaches youngsters in singing. She would project the image of the classic, fluttery poor-little-ole-me southern belle but is instead out of touch with reality. She is perceived as tiresome, helpless and eccentric. Hence the title.

Although exaggerated, the character is one we are familiar with and Cook brings out the proper audience response — a feeling of discomfort turns to pity as we begin to understand her.

HER PORTRAYAL of the minister's daughter, whose mother has gone off the deep end and retreated into her own little world, is excellent.

Richard Buzinski, realistically portrays the next-door neighbor, John Buchanan, a young doctor about to embark on a successful career, who is the

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focal point of most of Alma's fantasy world. Despite his mother, an ambitious, society-aware matron whom he respects and tolerates (Sandra Prappas) he tries to be sympathetic and a friend, though never showing serious concern for Alma.

The play is set in pre-World War I Mississippi, therefore explaining John's tolerance for his mother that any good, all-American lad would have shown. His mother has John's life all mapped out for him. When she perceives Alma's interest in her son, she cautions him about Alma's "strangeness" and friends who are not "in."

Elizabeth Halle gives a creditable performance as Alma's mother — an embarrassment when company calls. Neil Martin, the respected reverend who once addressed a University of Mississippi graduating class, is pitted for his wife's problem. He ambles around portraying a man carrying the cross — a well-done role, excellently made up. It is hard to tell his age.

Alma and the audience realize she has merely been creating a fantasy to protect her from life when she throws herself at John on a New Year's Eve movie date. He, also realizes how out of touch she is. She is then ready to settle for much less in life — telling John an hour with him would last an eternity.



Show extended

Nancy Gurwin of Southfield is starring in "I Do! I Do!" which has been extended through May at the Paradise, 17630 Woodward, Detroit. The Nancy Gurwin Production of the Broadway musical hit co-stars Lindsay Barr and is directed by Edgar A. Guest III of Birmingham. Performances are presented in dinner theater format with dinner at 7 p.m. and show at 8:30 p.m. each Friday and Saturday. For reservations call 869-3988.

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