Entertainment

Thursday, October 29, 1987 O&E

'Biloxi Blues'

He's Eugene in play but Arnold was his favorite role

E FELL IN LOVE at 13, and in the next eight years, adolescent fascinations of the lower of the lower fascination of the lower of the lo

allzing that's what I wanted to do," he said.

He sperienced a similar reaction a few years later when he first saw "Bilox!" Blues" the third sight it played in New York. It was love it rist sight but not for the role of Eugene, author Neil Simon's after ego. "I fell in lowe with Arnold." Jacobson said. "I knew I wanted to play Arnold somedy. I like Eugene but I loved Arnold.

He played Arnold last year with the national touring company of "Bilox! Blues." At the same time, he was the understudy for the role of Eugene.

was the ancerstary for the Country of the Eugene.
"I saw myself as Arnold, I developed Arnold and Eugene side by side. But I loved Arnold so much and I was trying so hard for him, I didn't have as much fun," Jacobson said.

"THEY'RE TWO different sides of

me. Arnold is stronger while Eugene wants to be a pleaser. He wants to be liked. They're opposite sides of the same coin."

wants to be a preaser, the wants to be idead to be same coin."

Playing the relaxed Eugene instead of the intense, highly principled Arnold has its benefits. "I'm very happy to be playing Eugene. I've loosened up on stage, instead of pushing every minute to give a good performance."

Five loosened up on stage, instead of pushing every minute to give a good performance.

Five loosened up on stage, instead of pushing every minute to give a good stage of the control of





Solid production recalls Simon's Army training

by Neil Simon continue through Sunday, Dec. 20, at the Birming-ham Theatre. For ticket informa-tion, call the box office at 644-3533.

There wasn't an empty seat in the house at the opening of Nell Simon's "Bilox! Blues" at the Birmingham Theatre, And, I expect, "Bilox!" will play to a full house as long as it's in

Theatre, And, I douges, "Filloss," with town.

The cast is terrific, the minimal sets and painted flats work beautifully, the model flats work beautifully flats and the model flats of the model flats with a flat flat flat flats. Simon is so comfortable onstage. He's such a pro that he makes the chaetergoer instantly at home. There's never any discomfort, any sense of having to adjust, the are transported into Simon's world, happily laughing two minutes after the actors open their mouths. Simon's flamous one-liners zing around the stage like paper airplanes that stay float no matter how much weight Simon loads them with.

"Bliost Blues" is the second play in Simon's autobiographical trilogy. We find Edgen Morris Je corne, very ably played by David Jacobson, far



aon in Lau



Helen Zucker

from Brighton Beach and the 1930s
Depression. We meet the budding
writer on a train headed for basic
training in the deep South. Eugene is
carrying a notebook and scribbling
about his fellow soldiers aboard the
train, and we follow his growth from
a naive boy to lucky (still scribbling)
survivor of World War II.
ALONG TIBE WAY Eugene looses
his virginity to a savvy prositiute.
Rowena, wonderfully played by Pat
Nesbit. Rowena manages to sell Eugene two bottles of black-market
perfume and a pair of nylons, and
Kosbit's slike, funny performance
makes you hope she'll turn up again.

Eugene also falls in love for the first time with the "perfect girl." Dalsy Hannigan. She's convent decided, well read, very pretty, versed in all the Dalsies in literature from "The Great Gastby" to "Dalsy Miller."

How can Eugene not fall in love with the girl he meets at a church dance? Falth Luther is sweet but never sticky, well-bred but never sticky, well-bred but never sticky and the still a still girl who believes passionately in Eugene's talent.

But it's the men Eugene shares his barracks with who walks off with the show. Kevin Kelly is great as

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GRAND RAPIDS

LANSING

Kelly is totally physical, he's Elivis 10 years before Elivis granted for his first audicine. The state of th

Simon's famous one-liners zing around the stage like paper airplanes that stay affoat no matter how much weight Simon loads them with.

Epstein observes. Epstein, who be-lieves in dignity, compassion and in-volvement becomes entangled in an inevitable duel with Sgt. Merwin J.

Robert Kurez manages, through sheer energy and technical skill, to make the character of Toomey a worthy adversary. Kurez plays a crazed cracker with a steel plate in his head, a man bent on discipline even when it makes no sense. I'm not sure I believe that Epstein could

beat such a man, but, after all, this is WWII seen through the eyes of Nei-Simon, Since the ride is so enjoyable who wants to quibble about mino-plot contrivances? Ron Stone as James Hennesey is remarkable as a gentle soldier in a world he isci-made for.

Helen Zucker has many pour experience renewing for newspapers and magazines in Michigan, New York and Massachusetts.





