

Assassin's family poignantly portrayed in 'Booth'

Theater Review

By ERIC GLENN
Staff Writer

In 1866, the name Booth became infamous, giving rise to feelings of anger at its mere mention. However, on Jan. 3, 1866, the greatest actor of the era, the actor all others were compared to for nearly half a century, made a triumphant return to the stage. That actor's name was Edwin Booth.

Edwin Booth's life is explored in John MacNicholas's new play *Booth*, which is running through Sunday at Drayton Hall. The play looks at parts of Edwin's adolescence and the years of his life before and after his younger brother, John, killed President Lincoln.

John MacNicholas has done an excellent job developing and crafting the characters in *Booth*. The most notable of which are the characters Edwin Booth, his wife

Molly and his father Junius. These people had a bond between them not even death could break, and MacNicholas' play tells their story well.

But a play is nothing without its players. And for this play there is a cast that is worthy of it. Edwin's part is portrayed with a great degree of emotion by Michael Joseph Donlan. He shows the strength of a man who has survived his father's insanity and death, his loving wife's tragic death at 22 and his name becoming a national scandal.

Edwin spent his life in the theater and much of that time playing Hamlet, the role he is best known for portraying. Donlan shows us a man whose life is built, shattered and rebuilt while he is haunted by his own demons, which he is finally able to conquer. And you believe him. The thing I find most intriguing about Donlan is his ability to go from being an adult to a child, from sanity to insanity, in the course of a scene.

Ron Hale should also be commended for his performance as Edwin's father, Junius Brutus Booth, who is said to be the greatest actor of his day. Junius is insane and prone to fits of madness from

which Edwin is able to retrieve him.

By the end of the first act, the audience admired Edwin for the depth of love and devotion he feels for his father. Hale delivers his lines with a passion that convinces you he has lost his grip on reality and is truly mad. Some of the most powerful scenes come when Junius is speaking to Edwin, as a person in some scenes and a phantasm in others.

E. Timna Guerchon should be complimented for her portrayal of Molly, Edwin's wife who tragically dies while he is away. Guerchon gives her character a warmth that makes Edwin's loss poignant and heart-touching to say the least.

I would also like to commend MacNicholas for his dialogue in the scene in which Edwin receives word of Molly's death. The scene is powerful.

Unfortunately, there isn't enough room for me to give *Booth* the review it deserves. There is so much to say and so little room. Everyone should see *Booth* and make up their own minds. I think it's more than worth the price of a ticket and two hours of the day.

Engineers Continued from page 4

"I know we can produce it cheaper than that," mechanical engineering senior Zeno Rausa said.

● A device to protect doctors from being splashed with dangerous material. This could protect doctors from being splattered with AIDS-infected blood during surgery in a more effective way

than a current doctor's mask can.

● A wheelchair lift to help people get access to vans. The current cost of such devices is \$2,000 to \$3,000. The group believes they can produce its lifts for less than \$700.

● An intravenous blood infusion device that pumps blood me-

chanically and prevents the need to hang the plasma bag. This device could prove invaluable in combat situations where it could be difficult, or even dangerous, to hold up the bag.

The group is now in search of funding for the production company that will produce these items, and others such as a special switch which allows children with cerebral palsy to operate a talking Teddy Ruxpin doll.



TUESDAY

- Barbara and Gerhardt Suhrstedt, piano duo, Koger Center, 8 p.m. Tickets \$10, public, \$5, students.
- *Booth*, play about Edwin Booth. Drayton Hall, 8 p.m. Tickets \$9, public, \$5, students.
- NAACP Founder's Day Program. Russell House Ballroom. Free.
- Robert Ward, Pulitzer Prize winning composer and conductor. Frazier Hall, 3-5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

- KODO, an 11-member percussion group from Japan. Koger Center, 7 p.m. Tickets \$12.50, adults, \$5, children.

THURSDAY

- American Ballroom Theatre performs sambas, waltzes and polkas. Koger Center, 8 p.m. Tickets \$12.50.

Dan Barabas/The Gamecock

The Koger Center Presents:



Piano Pioneers! Barbara & Gerhardt Suhrstedt

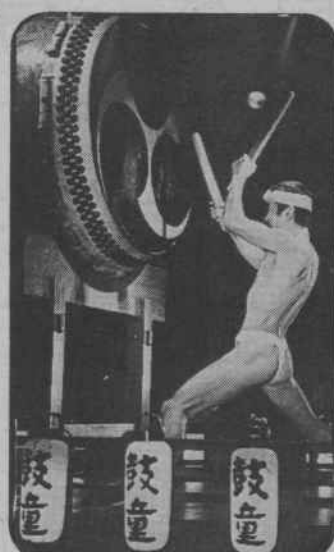
One piano plus four hands equals one evening of merry music making. Pioneers in revival of the piano duet as a concert medium, the Suhrstedt team combines imaginative programming with technical precision, performing familiar and neglected masterpieces along with new works often written expressly for them.
Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. \$10 adults, \$5 students.

Ba-BOOM! KODO, Heartbeat Drummers of Japan

The mystery and magic of the Orient are reflected in waves of awesome sound created by these 11 Japanese drummers. Using percussion instruments ranging from gongs to a huge 900-pound drum, these musicians coax everything from the roar of thunder to the gentle hum of crickets from their instruments. Displaying physical strength and stamina comparable to that of Olympic athletes, the drummers whip up a storm of exotic, sensual music while mesmerizing your eyes with their ferocious beating.

A special educational program, Just for Kids, will be offered before the show to help explain the concert to children. Just for Kids begins at 6:15 p.m. in the second floor donor room of Koger.

Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. \$12.50 adults, \$5 children. Child's price and Just for Kids sponsored by The State.



Romance! American Ballroom Theater

Gloriously graceful and beautifully attired, these championship ballroom dancers will treat you to one dreamy display. Fast and furious sambas. Perky polkas. Sweeping waltzes. This is dancing that would make Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers proud. It's the perfect show for the most romantic day of the year!
Feb. 14 at 8 p.m. \$12.50

"A very funny man, and a great actor..." John O'Neal as Junebug Jabbo Jones

Junebug Jabbo Jones, actor O'Neal's signature character, retraces African American history using stories, songs, poems, games and riddles drawn from Black America's rich trove of oral literature. In *You Can't Judge a Book by Looking at the Cover* (Feb. 15), Junebug traces the odyssey of a boyhood friend from his childhood days in rural Mississippi to the traumas of Chicago in the '50s and '60s. In *Ain't No Use in Going Home, Jodie's Got Your Gal and Gone* (Feb. 16), O'Neal explores the timely theme of blacks in the American armed forces. Michael Keck, a Grammy Award-winning composer and electronic keyboard artist, joins him in this two person comic drama.

Feb. 15 & 16 at 8 p.m. \$10 adults, \$5 students



Physical poetry! The National Theatre of the Deaf

A fresh, new kind of theatre emerges when the National Theatre of the Deaf performs its production of *One More Spring*. The Tony Award-winning company, which features deaf, as well as hearing actors, combines the spoken word with sign language to communicate Robert Nathan's touching tale of life during the Depression. Funny and warm, the play will woo and win you with a gentle sentiment reminiscent of *It's a Wonderful Life*.

The national tour of *One More Spring* is sponsored by Southern Bell. The State is the sponsor of a special \$2.50 ticket discount for the hearing impaired.
Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. \$10 adults, \$5 students. (\$2.50 off either price for the hearing impaired with a State newspaper coupon. Check the paper for a discount coupon or come by the Coliseum box office to obtain one.)

The lion of the piano Jose Carlos Cocarelli



Winner of the 1990 Van Cliburn Silver Medal, Cocarelli is hailed as a thinking and a feeling musician. He matches his technical brilliance with mature, polished interpretations. Hear his performance to understand why Claudio Arrau calls him "the lion of the piano."

Feb. 20 at 8 p.m. \$12.50

The best band in the land! River City Brass Band with USC Symphonic Band

Called the Boston Pops of brass, River City puts the fun back into music. Reviving the American brass band tradition, the 22-member band performs a repertory that ranges from familiar folk tunes to ballads, classical transcriptions to marches. The outstanding USC Symphonic Band will open this toe-tapping pops concert.

Feb. 22 at 8 p.m. \$6 adults, \$4 students

\$5 Carolina Student Rush!

USC students may purchase the next best available ticket to these events for \$5 starting 30 minutes before show time at the Koger Center. One ticket per student limit with valid USC Student I.D. Regularly priced tickets on sale in advance at the Carolina Coliseum box office and all SCAT outlets. Call 777-SCAT to charge.

All concerts presented in the Koger Center for the Arts at the University of South Carolina.

Come Celebrate

the

USC NAACP's 82nd ANNUAL FOUNDER'S DAY PROGRAM

Keynote Address: Nelson B. Rivers III
S.C. Executive Director of NAACP

Tuesday February 12th - 7:00pm
Russell House Ballroom

*Reception will follow