

## Carolina!

# Horseplay

'Equus' indicative of fine student direction

By LUPE EYDE  
Staff Writer

A sold-out audience gave the Theatre USC production of Peter Shaffer's "Equus" a standing ovation Thursday, the show's opening night.

The ovation was because of superb direction by Richard Blair and the inspired portrayal of young psychiatric patient Alan Strang by Thom Penn.

"Equus" is a psychological drama that examines the motivation behind 17-year-old Alan Strang's horrible act: the blinding of five horses with a hoof pick. He is recommended to Martin Dysart, a child psychiatrist played by William Hall, who examines his family life in search of clues to his crime.

I was very impressed with the production, first of all because of the nature of the play, whose major theme is human passion: how some people fear it, some live for it and others try to stifle it. Each character has his or her passion. For example, Alan's passion is horses, his mother's is the Bible, and his father's is the rejection of religion.

Secondly, the controversial relationship between religion and sexuality, which is the basis of Alan's obsession with horses, makes this play a must-see. From an early age he is both attracted to them and sees them as gods, and with his mother's influence of the Bible, goes about creating his own religion and rituals.

Third, Shaffer's examination of Dysart's own mid-life crisis is a key part of the play's impact. He knows his function is to "cure" young psychiatric patients and make them "normal," but he is losing faith in his profession. He sees his life as monotonous and pointless because he's lost the passion he had originally felt toward his job, and his marriage, hating the fact that what he is really doing is taking the passion away from children by turning them into very normal, but very boring, people.

No matter how masterful a play is written, it means nothing if the production doesn't do it justice. However, this is not the case with Richard Blair and his cast in "Equus." I can't even describe Penn's performance with normal adjectives, but it wouldn't be fair if I didn't acknowledge some of the smaller parts in the play, such as Kathryn Johnston's playing Dora Strang, Alan's mother, and S. Jack Silman as Frank Strang, Alan's father.

One of the many unique aspects of the play are the horses, which serve as characters, scenery, and similar to Greek tragedy, chorus. Here's where Blair's expertise comes in: the players tossed their heads, walked and stomped just like horses. The use of their presence on stage transcended the visual realm as they speak Alan's thoughts and dreams through chants and hoof stomps.

"Equus" makes you think and perhaps examines your own life and beliefs, which is why it's recommended for mature audiences only. In addition to the psychological nature of the play there is nudity in the second act, but this is secondary as it only adds to the plot and doesn't take away from the intense drama that unfolds on stage. "Equus" shows what a university production is capable of, in direction, acting and providing a forum for controversy and introspection.



Thom Penn and William Hall performed in USC's production of "Equus."

File photo

# BUCKLE UP!

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## Datebook

### Monday, March 28

Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, 7:45 p.m., Cafe Espresso. Call Kristi von Karowsky at 929-0525. Applications due for Outstanding Graduate Student Award, 777-2477.

### Tuesday, March 29

"Appreciating Oneself," workshop conducted by Dr. Ruthann Fox-Hines, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Workshop is free to students, but a limited number of spaces are available. Call the Counseling and Human Development Center at 7-5223.

Beta Alpha Psi meeting, S.C. Board of Accountancy (800 Dutch Square Blvd.). Topic is "CPA Exam Changes." Social at 5:30 p.m., followed by meeting at 6 p.m. Wear professional dress. Carolina for Kids, 6 p.m., RH 303.

### Wednesday, March 30

"Healing the Wound: Recovering from Loss," workshop conducted by Dr. Ruthann Fox-Hines, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Workshop is free to students, but a limited number of spaces are available. Call the Counseling and Human Development Center at 7-5223.

Chimera Self Defense Workshop, part 2, for females, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sponsored by the Office of Sexual Assault Programs. 777-8248.

Students Allied for a Greener Earth, 8:30 p.m., RH 302.

### Thursday, March 31

"An Easter Celebration," 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., RH Patio. Sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ. Call Brenda Brent at 799-2087.

### Friday, April 1

"Healing the Wound: Recovering from Loss," workshop conducted by Dr. Ruthann Fox-Hines, 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Workshop is free to students, but a limited number of spaces are available. Call the Counseling and Human Development Center at 7-5223.

### Thursday, April 7

Beta Alpha Psi, 7 p.m., visit to Epworth Children's Home. Casual dress. Call Charles Knight at 4-0396.

### Saturday, April 9

Beta Alpha Psi, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., picnic at Sesquicentennial Park. Ca-

sual dress. Call Charles Knight at 4-0396.

### Saturday, April 16

Outdoor benefit for the Women's Shelter, noon to 7 p.m., Immaculate Consumption, 933 S. Main St. Live music by Marlee McLeod, The Losers and The Drivers, as well as food and drinks. Tickets are \$5 plus a canned food item. 779-4706.

### Weekly Meetings

■ Sundays, Ballroom Dancing Club, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., P.E. Center.  
■ Mondays, Bible Study, 6:50 p.m., Baptist Student Union, 700 Pickens St.

■ Mondays and Wednesdays, free income tax assistance, 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., RH lobby. 7-4710.

■ Tuesdays, gay, lesbian and bisexual students support group, 4:30 p.m., Counseling Center.

■ Tuesdays, Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship, 8 p.m., Humanities 403.

■ Tuesdays and Thursdays, free tutoring for accounting students, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., BA 402. 7-4710.

■ Wednesdays, Student Outreach (USC admissions recruitment program), 5:30 p.m., Leiber College. Call Leigh Sloan at 7-4080.

■ Wednesdays, College Republicans, 8 p.m., Gambrell 250. Call Eric Dell at 926-7902 or Chip Payne at 750-5162.

■ Wednesdays, Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Association, 8 p.m., Gambrell 402.

■ Thursdays, Common Ground, 4:30 p.m., RH 203.

■ Thursdays, RHA, 7 p.m., RH 305. Call Rebekah at 4-2109.

■ Thursdays, "Heart to Heart," 7 p.m., Baptist Student Union, 700 Pickens St.

■ Thursdays, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 8 p.m., RH 303.

*The deadline for Datebook is two days before publication date. Submissions are free and printed according to available space.*

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