Cloud Nine

By MARK ROBERTS

I N CLOUD NINE, by radical British playwright Caryl Churchill, Dramashop has produced a fine and realistic performance. The play investigates sexual and class repression but is far from being a polemic or tract. The play makes free with conventional structure, so that the same set of characters appear in Act Two and the direction appears intact. One in 19th century colonial Africa, aged by only 25 years. Colonialism is taken as the epitome of a repressive society, where all the values and traditions of its community and society are in full effect. Beneath the surface acknowledgment of these values seethes a sea of distraught and suppressed passions. The head of the family, after fleeing a few hours before being seen in his head, is wearing a shirt of a local widow; his son and wife both love the heroic explorer, who himself casually struts away. The time before the scene is a kind of satirical cartoon version of the British Empire.

The cast play to match. Clive (Babek Aniok), the ruling head of the family, was overbearing and loud. Betty (Peter J. Parnassa), his wife, was particularly music, straining and twitching with the energy of someone forced to sit all day and "wait for men." The two handled their exchanges together well, the one hearty, the other brittle: "Were you all right today, dear? No hysterics, so far?" "Yes, thank you, I was very tranquil."

The finest performance was given by Michelle Perry (19), in the little boy, Edward, who "finds it very hard to be a man should be," preferring dolls to the soldierly pursuits his father encourages him in. Perry used the surreptitious side- glances of the child to good effect in her scenes with Creg E. White '93, playing Harry the explorer, whose bed Edward keeps to run to. The production as a whole showed signs of good direction. Jayme Koszyn kept pace and precision throughout the action, which is sometimes farcical. One of the finest pieces of business was the slow re- treat that Clive makes from Harry. This occurs after his hymns to the joys of "friendship between men" has been mis- taken as a paeon to homosexuality where, using a succession of chairs, big and little, like those of the three bears, he erects bar- ricles between them. The major draw- backs of the direction was that it left too little to be picked up by the audience on their own, preferring to draw attention to all but hyperbolic and exaggerate expressions or tones of voice.

The historical role of the old society has collapsed, but the character- stics still entrap themselves in stereotypical behavior. Betty, the wife, raccoons, now played by Joanna L. Koblik '92. She proves to be in some ways the most admirable character of all, rediscovering the self that was so long suppressed in service to hus- band, queen and empire.

Jayne Koszyn discusses sex and breaking boxes in Cloud Nine

JAYNE KOSZYN

An interview with the director of MIT Dramashop's production of Cloud Nine.

BY AARON MCMICHER

CLOUD NINE IS DIRECTED BY Jayne Koszyn, who works locally in Boston and has worked in Washington, DC, and in New York City. She is currently employed as a Literary Associate at the Huntington Theater Company, responsible for the research and written materials provided to artists working at the theater.

Jason Satterfield '90, Michelle Perry '89, and Craig White '93

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CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

CAST: DO JUSTICE TO WILLIAMS

Written by Tennessee Williams. Directed by Howard Davies. starring Kathleen Turner, Charles Durning, Polly Holliday, and DavidHugh Kelly. At the Shubert Theatre through Feb. 25.

By ANDREA LAMBERTI

IT IS A HOT SUMMER NIGHT in the South, and the electricity of the ap- proaching storm is like that of the passionate family. Everyone is gathered to Big Daddy's 60th birthday, and the mood is especially high because of the latest report from the doctor of his im- proved health. The family's true emotions are hidden just below the surface, like the rumbles of a thunder storm in the distance. Kathleen Turner stars as the temperamcntu Maggio, and David Hugh Kelly plays her suflen, alcoholic husband Brick, in the reproduction of Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof currently at the Shubert Theatre. The performance is carried by Big Daddy (Charles Durning), Big Mama (Polly Holliday) and Maggie (Mau'rizio Pollini). Durning adeptly fills the role of Big Daddy—a man whose family is greatly anticipating his death from cancer. Big Daddy's booming voice and frank aspect emphasize his intolerance toward his greedy son, Gooper (Ray Gill), and Gooper's wife Mae (Debra J. Rupp), who are waiting to obtain his wealth. Templeton (played, as shown in Fro Alien) is strong as Big Mama, a bus- ting busybody who has cheerfully submit- ted to the rules of society for her whole life. She won't admit that certain members of her family are in love with one another. She maintains her facade of cheerfulness and ignorance for the sake of all on the world until the final act, when she learns that... (Please turn to page 13)