

Revealing script and exquisite acting in *Getting Out*

GETTING OUT

Written by Marsha Norman.
Directed by Julia Soyer.
Student Center, Room 407.
April 10-12, 8:30 p.m.

By William Chuang
ARTS STAFF

I found *Getting Out* enthralling, both in script and in execution. Nearly every line in the play is revealing of character, and good acting brings this out strikingly. The play is innovative in its use of a single stage to represent both an apartment and a prison cell, with action proceeding in two places at once at times. However, this is no barrier to understanding the play or the characters, whose backgrounds are exquisitely expressed and

crafted by the actors. It is a wonderful play, and everyone should go see it — it is deeply moving, and FREE to boot.

Getting Out is about a young woman named Arlene (Charlene Suwanabhand '93); when the play opens, she is just being released from an eight-year prison term for murder. Arlene's memory of herself, called up by her fears and needs, is represented by Arlie (Joanna Kulik '92). Arlene's various visual cues, as simple as viewing the dirty floor of her old apartment, call up memories which are re-enacted by Arlie as the action develops.

As the play progresses, Arlene's character begins to unfold, showing how suspicious, tensely guarded, and withdrawn she is. Various events after her release, including confrontations with the prison guard (Paulo

Pereira '93) who accompanies her home, her former pimp (Tony Le '93), her mother (Dawn Nolt '92), and her upstairs neighbor Ruby (Sameera Iyengar '93), all bring about memories which are played out simultaneously by Arlie. In this manner, we begin to see beyond the violence that the young Arlie uses to mask troubles and abuse at home, and learn the sordid events leading up to her prison sentence.

We also see how Arlene has changed, striving to eke out a new existence for herself, even to the point of calling herself "Arlene" and not "Arlie" now that she has left prison. Arlene is determined to start again, hoping to regain a son who never knew her and who now lives in a foster home and perhaps be happy in a new, straight life. But there are so

many obstacles from her past which come to haunt her and lead her astray. It is these obstacles which create the amazing interplay of emotions between Arlie and Arlene and provide the audience with a richly detailed background of her life.

The night I went to see *Getting Out* was a pre-dress rehearsal. To see such a rich performance in such an early stage of the performance process can lead one to only one conclusion: that this weekend's performances are guaranteed to shine with talent and heartfelt emotions and to provide a satisfying evening of entertainment for all theater-goers clever enough to rush out to see *Getting Out*. It's quality theater and it's FREE — what more could you ask for?

Guitarist discusses new Blind Melon tour, rising fame

Blind Melon, currently based in Durham, North Carolina, is preparing to take the world by storm. Their quick rise from obscurity to a spot on the nationwide MTV tour with major college bands BAD II and PiL has tagged them as one of the stars to keep an eye on in the not-so-distant future.

Blind Melon's lead singer, Shannon Horn, is a friend of fellow Indiana native

Axl Rose and appeared in the recent video for Guns N' Roses' "Don't Cry," which many people saw as a harbinger of the band's future success. This

Thursday, April 16, the band will be at Brandeis University as part of the MTV Tour.

Is this your first tour?

Yeah, we've been on this for a couple of weeks now. I think. We started ... April 5th, I think. Maybe not. You get confused. Maybe that's my mother's birthday.

Describe the band's sound, without comparing it to other bands.

That's the hard part, you know, answering that without comparing. [You] always hear bands saying "We sound like one band or another."

We're just five guys, going in completely different directions, so when we create a song, it's completely unique. The best you could call it is southern psychedelic. I think

it's very psychedelic, and three of the guys are from Mississippi, so we have a Southern influence.

What do you bring to the band's sound?

Weirdness. (Laughs.) I don't know — I grew up on traditional folk music, and country, the traditional stuff, not modern country. I listen to a lot of Grateful Dead. At home I always play on an acoustic guitar.

Do you prefer the acoustic?

I like it, yeah. On the road now we've got about a half an hour each night, so we can't really slow things down for acoustic, I just have to plug in the electric and plow through. I like playing the electric, it's just that I would play acoustic if left to myself.

You were signed to a label pretty early on in your career.

We'd been together for about eight months when we were signed. I think we had about four songs. Of course, we told the company we had fifteen.

How does the song-writing process happen?

Well, we jam a lot, and a lot of ideas come out of that. When Glen [Graham] became our drummer, he turned us on to the style of just playing and seeing what came out of that. A lot of it had to do with North Carolina. We'd stay up all night and just jam. That's one way, but really the writing happens in every way possible. We actually do have about twenty songs now.

You moved from Los Angeles to North Carolina as a band. Why?

We were fed up with Los Angeles. All of us are from small towns. We moved to North Carolina and lived in a house together. It was a really positive thing for us to do, because you have to be brothers. It really worked out. On stage, we're a hundred percent better now.

You're recording your first album now. How's it coming along?

Well, we did seven songs, and now we're touring for six weeks. Then from New York we fly right back to Seattle to record eight or nine more. Then we'll pick the, I don't know, twelve best or so.

Why Seattle?

We really like [producer] Nick Parasher



Blind Melon is Shannon Hoon and Brad Smith (standing), and Thomas Stevens, Glen Graham, and Christopher Thorn.

(Pearl Jam, Temple Of The Dog). He hung out with us in North Carolina. He's made some great records, and he really has his act together. He works at his own studio up there in Seattle. I liked it up there — it's a great city. Fresh, clean, pretty hip.

And your first video is on MTV now.

Yeah, Paul Boyd made it for us. It's done on Super 8. It's psychedelic, it doesn't have a glossy look at all. He was really cool and relaxed. We just hung out and he filmed us and cut it together. I had some Super 8 of the band I took myself, and I gave it to Paul and told him "If you can use any of this, go ahead," and he used some of it.

With an album on the way, a video already out, and a tour with PiL and BAD II, how do you handle the pressure to succeed?

We feel it, and we talk about it a lot, but we have to eliminate that from our heads. When you go out and get a record deal and they give you money and say "go out and make a record," you don't want to disappoint anyone. That's what's so cool about doing a live show — you just do whatever and then forget about it. But in the studio you're thinking "This is going to be around forever." You get too critical of yourself. You want it to be perfect.

Do you have an intentional "sound" you aim for as a band?

I don't think anything's intentional. The production of our album has a stripped-down sound, a lot drier-sounding than some of the music out there. People shouldn't get an idea about who we are, though; they really have to hear us to know what we're like.

Need a bright idea?

We've got just what you've been looking for. A revamped On the Town will return to *The Tech* next Friday. On the Town lists arts and entertainment events on campus and throughout the Boston metropolitan area.