

Back to Beulah suspenseful

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During their treatment of the doctor, the three women reveal some of the torments they went through in their own "treatments". Unfortunately, the play never delves deeply into this fascinating area, but only skims the surfaces, distracted by trying to say too many things in too short a time.

The individual characters in the play are fascinating and extremely well acted, but the personalities of the three main characters are only outlined enough to make us wish we knew more. Instead, the play turns from the dynamic interaction of the main characters to the effects of the horrifying, if funny, torture of Dr. Anders. Her flashback to childhood is a jarring distraction, adding another element to an already complicated plot.

Most of the sound effects were used to good advantage, keeping the audience guessing as to whether the things they heard were real or simply part of the world inhabited by the women. Agnes' baby is only revealed to be a doll after we have heard it crying — or

does Agnes hear it crying? Tricks like this keep the audience in a state of suspense and offers the only glimpse into the way the characters see the world.

The main problem with this play, though, maybe its advantage. The just-slightly-unreal atmosphere evokes sympathy for the characters who are forced to live in it, although it repeatedly distracts the audience from really becoming immersed.

The play is also heavy with foreshadowing, especially with a symbolic furnace squatting in the background, ready for sacrificial immolations.

The point that saves this play from sinking into confusion is the ability of the actors, especially those with principal roles. Scenes are delicately balanced between farce and hysteria, and sympathetic portraits of the women are carefully drawn. The directing is also excellent, the pace varying from slow to rapid-fire, three-way conversations flying, with the overall point never lost. Had the plot been somewhat clearer, this could have been a complete success.



The many faces of Max Roach

Music

Jazz legend Max Roach

story by Mike Spindloe

The Yardbird Suite this Thursday night plays host to two shows by legendary jazz drummer Max Roach and his quartet. Roach is perhaps best known as the composer of *Drum Conversation*, first recorded in 1953, and for his work with seminal jazz artists like Charlie "Bird" Parker, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis, Clifford Brown, and so on.

Despite his current status as an elder statesman in the jazz world, Roach continues to work regularly in the context of his quartet, which includes Cecil Bridgewater on trumpet, Odean Pope on tenor saxophone and flute, and Tyrone String Quartet and a jazz percussion ensemble called M'Boom,

which has recorded three albums.

Roach's career began at age sixteen when he was given the opportunity to sit in with Duke Ellington's orchestra for a couple of shows. Soon he was playing for groups like the Benny Carter Orchestra and Charlie Parker's quintet, along the way helping to create the form of jazz known as bebop.

Like many other musicians, he became politicized in the 1960's, recording "We Insist! Freedom Now Suite" with singer Abbey Lincoln and along with Charles Mingus, organized a walkout to protest the commercialization of the Newport Jazz Festival.

Roach has been a professor at the University of Massachusetts since 1973, but continues to perform and record. His latest album is *Bright Moments*, on Soul Note.



Back to Beulah takes a look at insanity.

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