

## REVIEW

## The Man in the Glass Booth

BY ALLANA MOORE

I walked out of Memorial Auditorium last week feeling like I had just been steamrollered by humanity's dark side. Green Candle Theatre Company's production of *The Man in the Glass Booth* forces the audience to remember the ghastly reality of Hitler's reign of terror. The play stabs the audience with powerful questions which society tends to shy away from: How did this happen? How was this one man able to rise to such an influential position of power? Why did the Jews not revolt? How does it feel to be a survivor?

*The Man in the Glass Booth* is intricately woven with thick threads of dialogue and demands the audience's undivided attention. The characters' lines bend into and away from one another so strategically that the play radiates with underlying symbolism, burying the notions of power, fear and control into the audience's awareness. The audience needs to be an alert, silent observer; if a line is missed, or an interaction between characters overlooked, a whole forum of controversy could be missed. The play is heavy — it needs to be; these are heavy issues being addressed.

The production opens with slides of Hitler

saluting and smiling down on his followers, reminding the audience that this historical figure was human; he was one of us, but somewhere in his life, his mind turned sinister, he embraced raw evil and used it as a soapbox to manipulate victims into his playgrounds of torture.

The first act takes place in Arthur Goldman's penthouse suite where we are introduced to the characters and plot, which revolves around Goldman's true identity. Is he Arthur Goldman, a successful self-starter who fled to America after the war, or is he Adolf Dolf, the infamous S.S. officer known for his exceptionally twisted methods of torture? The play builds around this question and crescendos at the end with a suspenseful conclusion.

John D. Alexander's portrayal of Goldman and Dolf is both riveting and intriguing. He delivers his lines with such crisp, blunt wit that he saves the play from falling into an overdramatic void. Likewise, Ryan Ober's performance as Charlie Cohn, Goldman's right-hand man, keeps the emotional content of the play diverse and steady with his innocence, purity, and devotion to justice. The play defiantly answers the questions it raises by

pointing out that humans will succumb to anything, perform unthinkable acts, and surrender their morality and reason when a gun is held to their heads.

*The Man in the Glass Booth* manages to cover a lot of ground in its two-hour running time. Green Candle should rest assured that they have created another worthwhile production of both social and political importance, and have achieved their mission statement of providing high quality theatre for a low price. If you enjoy emotionally and intellectually stimulating theater, I highly recommend this production. As Alexander put it, "given the wrong set of circumstances, the same situation could happen again." If we do not keep this horrifying history in our consciousness, chances are it risks being repeated. **V**

*The Man in the Glass Booth will be performed at Memorial Auditorium in Burlington on June 18-20 at 8 p.m. Suggested donations \$5-15. For more information, call 893-7333 or 86-FLYNN.*