

New Theater Company's Play Is Tou

By ROBERT W. PLYLER

There is a new theater company in town, and they're currently presenting the world premiere of a touching, yet very funny play called *The Giraffe Who Came to Dinner*.

The Bunbury Theatre Company, taking its name from one of Oscar Wilde's most hilarious non-characters, perform in the basement of Covenant Manor, in a theater which they have constructed with their own hands.

The play is the work of a member of the company, Matthew J. Kraft, who also plays the male lead. It is the story of a young couple in their mid-20s. Glenn and Dana have always been buddies, who supported each other through the many pitfalls of growing up. Now they're grown, she's engaged to someone else, and they're beginning to think that perhaps their relationship is more than buddies, after all.

Both characters are natural and effective. Glenn isn't a paragon, he's a blowhard and a bit of a lout, but he has a soul, and he'll find a way to fix the

rest. Dana talks independence and self-reliance, but she's a scared woman, and she's not unwilling to let a man face the slings and arrows for her, although she wouldn't dream of admitting it.

Both Glenn and Dana have other people in their lives. Glenn finds the attractive pizza delivery girl vastly less complicated than Dana, and she finds the successful, brilliant professor far more reliable than Glenn. But the audience knows from the opening that they're going to land together, and there is more than enough reason to make us root for them, all the way.

This is a young writer's play, and there are a few areas in

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which that shows. For example, Glenn has too much of the Animal House about him, and sometimes goes beyond off-beat charming, and all the way to annoying. Once the couple realize they're meant to be together, the play takes too long to get them there.

Still, the wit is quick, the situations are often very funny without being corny or unbelievable, and everyone on stage is a real human being and not a literary device.

Kraft is a skilled physical comic and has a mobile face and an excellent physical presence,

which mean he's someone to watch for, both on stage and behind a word processor.

Melissa N. Bieseke kept Dana a sympathetic presence even when whining and becoming temporarily weak. It was a well-controlled performance.

Les Buhite and Amy M. Payeur did fine work as the supporting players.

Director Len Barry steers everything along realistically, reading the script accurately and interpreting it clearly and decisively. Bravo.

The Giraffe Who Came to Dinner repeats at 8 p.m. Nov. 14