

# 'Don Juan in Hell' offers unique view

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Staff Writer

CHARLESTON — "Don Juan in Hell" may not portray the popular images of Heaven and Hades, but...

"It's very funny," says director Marjorie Duehmig. "It's cleverly written, the cast is great — it's a dream."

Originally an act of Bernard Shaw's "Man and Superman," "Don Juan in Hell" was frequently cut from stage productions because of the play's epic length.

Duehmig said the act, which stands alone without reference to the rest of the play, gained popularity in the early 1960s when it was performed in a readers' theater or interpreters' theater context.

"Don Juan in Hell," a sardonic, conversation-oriented piece that depicts Hell as a place of self-gratification and Heaven as a place of dull realism, is performed by four actors reading from scripts on stage without extravagant sets or period costumes.

"A lot of people think, 'Ooh, readers' theater, how boring,'" Duehmig said. "But it's much more fun than people might think."

Besides, she says, the play is for a good cause.

Money from ticket sales will benefit the David and Audrey Jorns Theater Scholarship. Eastern President Jorns, in fact, plays the Devil in the production.

Duehmig said she is curious how the audience will respond to

Jorns' role as Satan and the images of Heaven and Hell the production shows.

"It's thick with irony," Duehmig said. "The irony that Don Juan, this great womanizer, is in Hell but is unhappy there."

Hell, according to the play, is the place for fun, where people can indulge in selfish pleasures. Heaven, on the other hand, is a place for those devoted to making a kinder, gentler human race.

Comprising the cast with Jorns are fellow faculty members Jerry Eisenhower as Don Juan, James Pierson as the Statue and Jean Wolski as Dona Ana.

"Don Juan in Hell" is the first faculty-cast performance at the theater since 1993's Summer Theater production of "Barefoot in the Park."

And though the faculty members don't see as much stage time as the students at the theater, Duehmig said they were all "very professional."

"Even if they haven't been on stage in a couple of years, they're all familiar with the work and with performing," she said. "It's kind of like riding a bike."

"Don Juan in Hell" will be performed at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday on the Mainstage of the Doudna Fine Arts Center on the EIU campus.

Admission is \$8 for adults, \$6 for senior citizens and \$3 for EIU students. Tickets can be ordered by calling 581-3110 and will be available at the theater ticket office one hour before each showtime.