

The Oregonian

October 25, 2002

"Zoo Story" and "The American Dream": Profile Theatre Project's radiant staging of two early Edward Albee one-acts is a rare opportunity to see the reputation-establishing works of a major contemporary playwright performed as they should be.

In a defining performance, Michele M. Mariana takes full, humorous command of an improbably dysfunctional household as Grandma in "The American Dream."

A biting satire of America's desires and the falsity of its personal relationships, "Dream" is as relevant today as when it premiered, in 1961. David Berkson is equally good in "The Zoo Story." As the storytelling transient Jerry, he compels both disgust and compassion. His challenge to complacent family man Peter (Kevin Connell) to defend his "ownership" of a park bench demands we rethink what we are willing to fight for.

Continues 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through Nov. 17. Theater! Theatre!, 3430 S.E. Belmont St.; \$12-25, 503-242-0080.

- Michael McGregor