



## A Home Away From Home

By Maura Elwood

You try the first door. Locked. Move to the left. Try the second door. Locked. Move it over. You try the next two doors until the fifth door clicks open. Walking through the double doors of Loyola's McManus theatre, while balancing a takeout box of dinner and drink from Boulder, the sounds of people laughing greet you instantly. Dramatic retellings of events of the day, laughing, and conversations bounce off the walls of the McManus Theatre. This small theatre, dimly lit and flushed red by the reflections of lights reflecting off a sea of creaky, red seats, is where I have spent most of my days during my first year at Loyola. The focal point of this room is the

atre's atmosphere: what creates this feeling is the group of people sitting in the seats before rehearsal starts. The warm atmosphere of the theatre is a home at Loyola to countless people, including me. The familiarity of the space and of the people who inhabit it is something that struck me the second I walked in for auditions for *Macbeth* in the fall and is something I have chased ever since, through my involvement both on stage and behind the scenes in four theatre productions at Loyola. The wonderfully eccentric people who occupy the seats at McManus gave me the first home I found at Loyola that I feel a part of both in and out of the performance space.

The people of Loyola theatre are really weird—and they like it that way. It works.

Before each and every show, the cast and crew of the production conclude warm-ups with the most eccentric and loudest tradi-

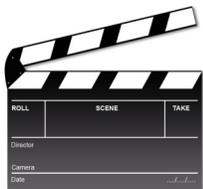
tion at Loyola. It starts with the group laying on their stomachs on the floor of the rehearsal room. Softly, but surely, they begin to tap on the floor in a heavy beat. Whispers begin to chant a string of tongue-twister expletives in the form of an R-rated poem. With each passing verse, the chants grow louder and louder as the group rises from the floor to standing position. By the end, everyone in the room is jumping, stomping, and screaming the verses. It ends with the group rushing to the middle of the room, hands in, to scream their favorite line from the show on the count of three, and then they're off to places for their show.

Theatre at Loyola is most definitely a place where you can be yourself, however quirky you may be, but it is not only a place for actors or theatre majors: its familial aspect includes a sort of patchwork group of people.

As an incoming college freshman, meeting new

people is the thing that worried me the most. Loyola theatre provided me with an instant connection between a large group of students of all ages and can provide that to anyone, regardless of experience level.

Rather than being a place for talented actors and actresses to strut their stuff, the theatre program at Loyola is simply an accepting group of people who work towards a common goal. And creating a world together, in turn, provides all those involved, and those who come to see the production, a home away from home at Loyola. Any student, whether a first-year with no experience, or a senior theatre major, can find a spot to fit into this odd collection of people: they can find a family, friends, a new passion, a home away from home, or even just a great laugh.



black stage, illuminated by dazzling lights, but it is not a large contributor to the the-

