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THEATER REVIEW

Profile takes smooth 'Ride Down Mt. Morgan'

By **RICHARD WATTENBERG**
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

The Profile Theatre Project closes out its Arthur Miller season with a generally engaging and surprisingly humorous production of "The Ride Down Mt. Morgan" — a work that was first performed in London in 1991 but is only now receiving its U.S. West Coast premiere.

This play's action centers on Lyman Felt, a one-time socially conscious and still successful life insurance company executive. Lyman, who has a lusty appetite for life, has gotten himself into a rather sticky situation. He has two wives and two lives that he has carefully kept apart, but now, hospital bound as a result of a car crash on an icy Mt. Morgan road, Lyman finds himself unable to prevent his two worlds from colliding.

At the heart of Felt's predicament is a conflict that has pervaded Miller's plays since he offered us "All My Sons" in 1947: the conflict between individual desire and social responsibility.

Believing that the human personality is too complex to accommodate itself to social conventions like monogamy, Lyman seeks to be



PROFILE THEATRE PROJECT
Dan Kremer has his hands full with two wives (Kathleen Worley, left, and Jacque Drew) in "The Ride Down Mt. Morgan."

true to himself by fulfilling his every yearning. In this pursuit he sees nothing wrong with deceiving his wives. Besides, both women have been happy — happy in ways that neither would have been if Lyman hadn't had the other to turn to whenever he suffered "normal marital boredom."

Lyman epitomizes the "me first" values of the '80s, a selfish sensibility for which Miller seems to have little sympathy. And yet Lyman

participants in Lyman's lies.

His persuasive insistence goes a long way toward justifying his conduct; however, the play's humor, which this production so ably uncovers, distances us from Lyman's self-indulgence.

In the spirit of Miller's masterpiece, "Death of a Salesman," this play moves in and out of the protagonist's head. Structurally the piece is pretty loose. The script produced here is tighter than the original published version, but Lyman's emotional perambulations, especially those of the second act, could be even more compactly presented.

As Lyman, Dan Kremer does a fine job propelling the play forward. Avoiding all that might sug-

gest sentimental self-pity, his Lyman has a clarity, an energy, a vitality that make him seem larger than life or at least larger than the life around him.

As the two wives, Kathleen Worley playing Theo and Jacque Drew playing Leah contrast nicely. Tall and elegant, Worley captures the refinement of the WASPISH Theo but also conveys her vulnerability. Drew ably limns Leah's wry humor and her earthy, solid, hard-to-shake demeanor.

Although the blocking is at times a bit awkward, director Jane Unger keeps the play flowing smoothly.

8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, through May 6. Theater! Theatre!, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. \$15-\$20, 503-242-0080.