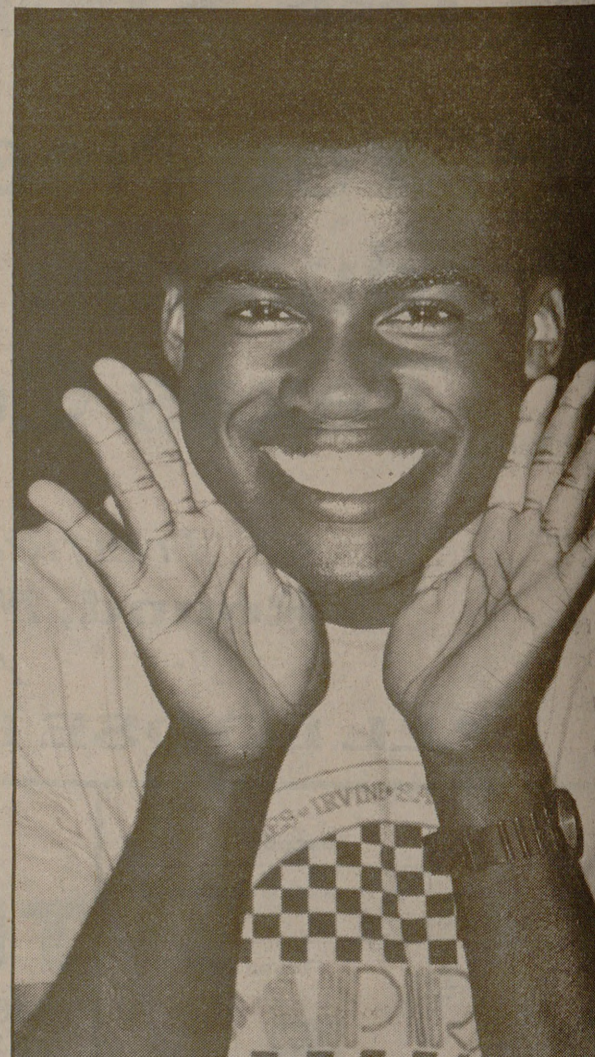
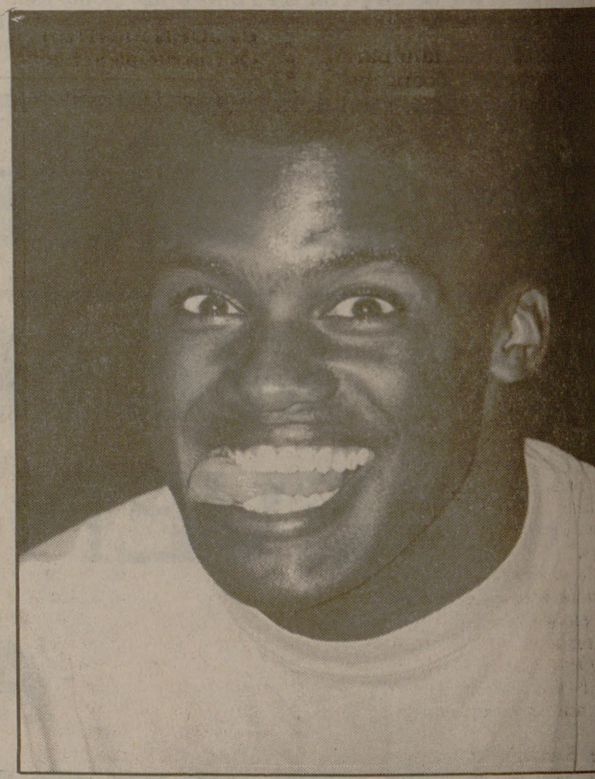
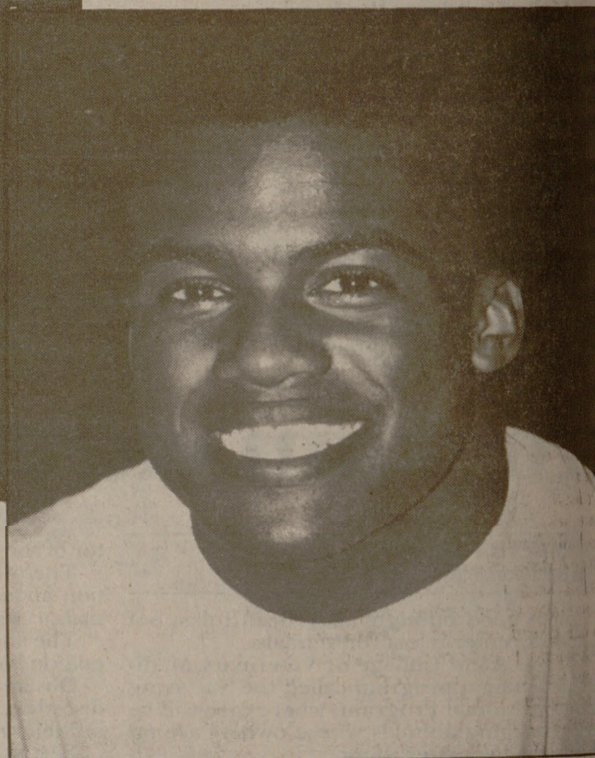


Oliver TWISTS Talent into Success

Photos by Eric H. [unclear]



By RUDY CORDOVA JR.
Of The Battalion Staff

The hunger for success radiates in the eyes of Oliver Tull - actor, comedian, playwright and U.S. Army Sergeant. A senior Theatre Arts major from Dallas, Tull has performed at comedy clubs that range from The Laff Stop in Houston to The Improv in Los Angeles. A few weeks ago College Station got a taste of his comedy when he performed a successful and funny show at the Sundance Club in the College Station Hilton. Tull's ability to perform stand-up routines has influenced his active role as playwright, director and actor in the A&M theatre. Born in Brooklyn, Tull says it was tough growing up in a family where talent ran rampant. During family talent shows, Tull says he would sit in the back of the room and make wisecracks at his brothers and sisters as they sang or played the piano. He says his talents remained untapped until he finished high school and joined the military intelligence division of the U.S. Army. While stationed in West Germany, Tull unveiled his comedic talents for the first time when a simple group introduction turned into a stand-up routine. "I had to introduce an instrumental group in the talent contest," Tull says, "and they had a lot of computers on stage. "When it came time, I did this long introduction and told the audience the group's name. I turned around to walk off and saw the guy's computer screen go blank. So I had

to stay on stage for eight minutes while they fixed their stuff.

"And that was the first time I did stand-up."

Tull has written several, unperformed plays. He says that playwrighting comes from his natural ability to create stand-up comedy.

"As far as directing," he says, "I think it comes out of an actor's drive for more control."

He recently directed "Goat Racers", a production performed in the Fallout Theatre and at Coffehouse in the MSC.

Director of Theatre Dr. Roger Schultz says, "Oliver is one of the best students we have. He's a good playwright, director, and he's even played lead roles in 'Waiting for Godot' and 'Hedda Gabler'."

Tull was recently elected president of the Aggie Players Association for the 1990-91 school year. The association is a student-run organization that supports the productions put on by the theatre department's programs such as Aggie Players.

Among many plans Tull has for next year is his goal to make A&M more aware of the Theatre Arts program and its abilities.

He believes that a great strength of the Aggie Players is the organization's commitment to cross-cultural casting.

"The Aggie Players are just making sure that they get the best person for the role," he explains, "regardless of their race or color."

Tull hopes that the creation of an improvisational group will expose the theatre in a more positive, educational light. The improvisational group would provide a format for students, not normally associated with the theatre department, to voice their innermost feelings and thoughts on subjects that range

from politics to social issues.

Tull also plans to create an amateur comedy club for beginning comics. He has been in contact with stand-up comedians from around the state about transforming his idea into a realistic venture.

Another goal of Tull's is to expand the realm of avant-garde theatre. Because of the size of the University, he believes there is an overwhelming amount of untapped ideas and talent.

"We could be at the front of the next theatrical trend," Tull says. "It would be a shame for us to miss out because we're afraid of doing something, that somebody, somewhere might not like."

The Aggie Players say they have faith in their new leader. "He knows where he's going, he knows how to get there, and he's doing it," senior Theatre Arts major K.C. Rabensburg says. "Oliver is the Renaissance man, today, at this theatre."

With Tull's raw talent, it's easy for him to look back at the people who have influenced him. Tull says that his uncle gave him the most important piece of advice: "Never eat anything bigger than your head," a phrase Tull claims he still lives by.

Tull adds that comedian Jay Leno, who he met earlier this semester at The L.A. Improv, is another person who has influenced him.

"He changed the way I look at comedy," Tull says.

Of course, this talented performer has goals. "I think all anybody can hope for," he says, "is to do the best they can."

He adds jokingly that his long-term ambition is "to buy a house the size of Robin Leech's ego."

Tull says his summer plans consist of touring and working at comedy clubs. He says he hopes to keep writing and doing stand-up comedy, "and maybe make some people think about life along the way."

Talents roll on and on and ...

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With Oliver Tull's many talents, his acting career has flourished at Texas A&M. His ability to play a wide range of characters has enabled him to act in various productions, including one in Germany and another at Richland College in Dallas. Here is a partial listing of Oliver's acting accomplishments:

- **West Side Story:** While stationed in Germany, Tull played the role of Riff in this popular musical, the contemporary version of "Romeo and Juliet."

- **Private War:** In this production at Richland College, Tull played the role of Gatley.

- **Pirates of Penzance:** His first Aggie Player production cast him as a pirate in this musical by Gilbert & Sullivan.

- **InVitro:** Directed by Dr. Roberto Pomo, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, Tull experienced ensemble theatre in this avant-garde play written by Matt Hunt, a graduate of Texas A&M.

- **Hedda Gabler:** Tull portrayed Eliot Lovburg in this Henrik Ibsen play that Dr. Roger Schultz set in late 19th century Galveston.

- **Roan Brown and Cherry:** Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Charles Gordone, Distinguished Lecturer in Theatre Arts, wrote and directed this play that featured Tull as Ben Solomon.

- **Waiting for Godot:** This absurdist play by Samuel Beckett was taken to the American College Theatre Festival by the Aggie Players earlier this spring, where they received Honorable Mention at the National level. Tull played the part of Vladimir.



Battalion File Photo by J. Janner

John Flores, All Alford, Tull and Clinton Sam perform in a scene from the Aggie Players' October production of "Waiting for Godot." Tull played the role of Vladimir.