



Directed by Marianne Weems, *Super Vision* is a collaboration between the theater company The Builders Association and the visual design group dbox.

When Privacy Is Only a Concept

'Super Vision' at the Hop Focuses on Identity Theft and Other Intrusions

By WARREN JOHNSTON
Valley News Staff Writer

A WELL-MEANING FATHER steals his 9-year-old son's identity to cover the massive debt needed to maintain the family's lifestyle.

Border guards force an international businessman to reveal more and more of his private life in order to be admitted to this country.

A young tech-savvy New Yorker makes digital copies of her Sri Lankan grandmother's past as the older woman disappears into the future.

The three stories will unfold tomorrow night and Saturday at the Hopkins Center at Dartmouth College in the high-tech performance of *Super Vision*, a play that combines the work of seven actors with computer-enhanced visuals and compelling music. Judging from the video, it's a stunning performance of life in the post-privacy age.

The New York-based show, which has toured the world, is a collaboration between the Obie Award-winning theater

company The Builders Association and the visual design group dbox, and is under the direction of Marianne Weems.

"What we're trying to do with *Super Vision* is hold a mirror up to what exists" in the post-9/11 data-driven culture, Weems said in a telephone interview last week.

An average person leaves a data trail in order to function in today's world. That electronic trail begins at birth and follows us until we die, Weems said.

"Every time you use a credit card, there's a trail," she said, adding that a lot of people make their private information public. "They see that as part of themselves," but others may be surprised about how much private information is available and is being tracked.

Weems, the artistic director of The Builders Association, was part of a panel discussion this week at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, which is co-sponsoring *Super Vision* in conjunction with this year's Tech@Tuck event.

The show has been well-received internationally, but in countries such as the Great Britain and Scotland, where there are moves to establish a national identity card and much public debate about privacy issues, audiences seem to find *Super Vision* more disturbing than, for instance, in Australia where privacy is more secure, Weems said.

In the introduction to the play, Weems will set the stage for the Hopkins Center performances by telling the audience about the data collected on them from the credit cards used to purchase the ticket, she said.

Then, the show begins with "a whole lot of video and six performers presenting three technically complex stories," Weems said.

The actors appear on a set that is much like a giant computer screen as the three stories move through the technically enhanced scenes that expose the characters to humor and frustration and leave the audience with a sense of

See "SUPER VISION" — C9

'Super Vision' at the Hopkins Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

empathy.

As the show progresses, the father fails to see the downside and the breakup of his family as he fights to save his financial scheme; the granddaughter dismisses her grandmother's growing senility as she prompts her over a videophone to remember photographs being digitally scanned, and the business traveler resists the relentless questions from customs officials about his private life until he finally gives in and all the details are recorded.

Since its founding in 1994, Weems and The Builders Association have produced 10 large-scale theater pieces

that build on each other.

In addition to working on a musical about former Philippines First Lady Imelda Marcos with singers David Byrne and Fatboy Slim, Weems is putting together the next Association production, *Invisible Cities* about at-risk teenagers in New York's varied communities, she said.

The Builders Association and dbx perform "Super Vision" tomorrow and Saturday at 8 p.m. in Moore Theater. A discussion with company members immediately follows each show. Reserved tickets are \$26. Call (603) 646-2422.