One Acts: Rotating repertory gives insights

By Elizabeth O'Keefe
Entertainment Editor

"What is reality?" "Does the end justify the means?" or more importantly, "Do we really smoke?" and if they do, did they quit for the Great American Smokeout yesterday? Your Philosophy 205 professor may not have addressed all of these questions, but the One Act Festival being performed tonight and Saturday night at 8 p.m. in the Interim Performing Arts Center definitely exercises the philosophical and creative mind.

Five Plays

The three day festival, which began Thursday, includes five plays being performed in a rotating repertory: Woody Allen's "God: A Play," Megan Terry's "Keep Tightly Closed in a Cool, Dry Place," Sam Shepherd's "Angel City," David Mamet's "Duck Variations," and Thomas Kuhlman's "Idiots Delete." Creighton faculty and students direct and perform in the featured plays.

Reality?

"What is reality?" refers to "God: A Play" directed by Ed Stein. When an ancient Greek playwright, played by Mark Fellows, searches for the prize-winning ending to his play he resorts to suggestions from his 20th century audience, in particular, "Doris," a philosophy major at Brooklyn College, played by Jennifer Yarns. This situation in the hands of Woody Allen can only lead to sarcasm and chuckles.

Although the humor in the show has "Insides" for New York audiences, good timing and an effective delivery by the playwright's main character, played by Kevin Coonan, and by chorus members, especially Leah Hill, are bound to make you laugh even if you don't know what they are referring to by "Sardi's."

No solution

Doris' contemporary philosophies, in relations to the Greeks', don't offer any solutions for the playwright, but only add to the prior chaos and confusion. This "pure thought" approach contrasts the simplicity of thought found in "Duck Variations," directed by Kathleen Eckel.

Ducks spark ideas

An on-going conversation about ducks by old men, played by Galen Chun and Nick John, turns into a humorous analogy of life. Their uncomplicated conclusions root from experience; "everything has a purpose," "we're all doomed to die," "nothing can live without the care of other living things... except maybe a cactus."

Soft lighting and soothing music set a comfortable, easy-going mood.

Contrasting works

Another work contrasting the solitude and wisdom of old age found in "Duck Variations," is "Angel City," directed by Gerry Ostliek. Possessed by greed, filmmakers search for the end-all scheme to capture the movie buyers. The self-seeking gluttony of the film company gives a grim outlook on humanity.

Strong performances

"Keep Tightly Closed in a Cool, Dry Place," directed by Michael Hitzelberger, demands strong, erratic performances from its actors. The scene is a prison cell. Three men struggle for peace within themselves and with the outside world. David Kroll, Michael Hitzelberger and Brian Travers go through exhausting characterizations, erupting in lust, violence and frenzy where pain, pleasure and desire are expressed in their raw forms — uninhibited and uncontrolled.

The scene changes, if they can be called that, are based on improvisations in which "given circumstances" change rapidly, destroying and replacing fixed realities. An intense lighting design contributes to an excellent overall performance.

True story

"Idiots Delete," is directed and written by Thomas Kuhlman, associate professor of English. The play is based on a moral scandal in Omaha in 1937, when the mayor, Horatio Adams — known as H.A., H. — was the play, tried to ban "Idiots' Delight" from being performed in Omaha.

The play offers plenty of puns for those familiar with Omaha's history. Margaret Dube, who portrays the actress Lynn Fontaine, is the stronghold of the production with support from Judson Jones as her partner Alfred Lunt.

Friday's performance will include: "Idiots Delete," "Angel City," "God: A Play," and Saturday's performances will include: "Duck Variations," "Angel City," "Keep Tightly Closed in a Cool, Dry Place," and "God: A Play."

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