

Review of A Night of One Acts

By Brodie MacRAE

Hopefully, everyone reading this had the common sense to make it out to the UPEI Theatre Society One Acts this semester. If not, for shame! Not supporting your campus theatre organization like that! Missing out on some fantastic entertainment as well. You've only hurt yourself, you know. It's pitiful, really.

It has become an annual tradition for the UPEI Theatre society to hold a night of one acts in the fall semester. This year's one acts took place on the evenings of the 14th - 16th of November in the Duffy Amphitheatre with three plays on the agenda: *Postponing the Heat Death of the Universe* by Stephen Gregg, *Poets* by Lennie MacPherson and Matt Stewart and *Interiors* by Dean Barrett. The productions were entirely student produced, directed (with the exception of Danny Maloney) and acted.

Postponing the Heat Death of the Universe was directed by Danny Maloney and featured Adam Gauthier as Nick a freshman who has just discovered he has lost a contest for a \$5000 scholarship; Mary Clements as Stacy, his potential love interest; and Melanie Stavert as Jackie, the winner of the scholarship contest. The story takes place in a university dorm room shortly after Nick has discovered that he lost the contest. Jackie comes into his room uninvited to offer him condolences and rub her victory in his face, but Nick makes gloating difficult for her by refusing to move from his bed. The rationale he offers is that since theoretically someday, all of the energy in the universe will be used, resulting in its heat death, by lying still and not expending energy, he is granting mankind a few extra moments of existence. However, in his attempt to keep the universe from plunging into disorder, he allows Jackie to bring chaos to both his room by messing it up and his life by jeopardizing his potential relationship with Stacy. In the ensuing disorder, both Nick and Jackie lower their barriers and discover they have more in common than they realised.

Although this isn't one of Gregg's stronger scripts, it has its



Interiors was so risqué that on the third night some crowd members left for the exteriors (of Duffy)

charm. It's clever, intelligent and enjoyable. The ending is bit cheesy, which I found it a little hard to digest, but the story and dialogue keep the audience's attention very well. The set was a problem, as although it was supposed to be two separate dorm rooms (Stacy's and Nick's), the initial impression was that it was one room and that the two were roommates. The rooms themselves were well-designed and the contrast between the two was strong, Nick's being somewhat unorganized while Stacy's was neat and tidy. This highlighted the theme of order vs. chaos that was central to the play. However, they needed to be separated somehow to avoid confusing the audience for the first 5 minutes. The actors were all well suited to their characters and played them with ease, but they didn't play off each other terribly well. The chemistry between Nick and Jackie wasn't very strong, which should have developed faster for their eventual pairing up to be realistic.

Matt Stewart and Lennie MacPherson wrote, directed and starred in *Poets*, the only student-written production of the night. The story focuses on two young poets, Julian and Murphy. Murphy is struggling to write a quality poem about a failed romance and Julian is trying to convince a sceptical friend of the relevance of poetry in today's society. The play also featured Norah Pendergast as Lucinda, Julian's friend and Joey Weale as

Arthur, the teacher of the poetry class.

This show was simply great and not just because Matt Stewart is my boss. The acting was very strong, especially from Weale, whose comedic timing and ability to create an interesting character never ceases to amaze. Although a few aspects of the script were unclear, it was consistently funny and the subject matter was intelligent. The poems that were supposed to be bad were very bad and the good poems quite good. It was even a bit enlightening, offering arguments as to why poetry is as valid an art as any other and remains thus today.

Interiors was directed by Theatre Society veteran Erin Fagan and assisted by Andrew MacPhee. The play is about an encounter between

two relatively dull students, Amy and Michael (played by Jenn MacLean and Gary Vincent), while their ids hover behind them (Marieve MacGregor and Brad Deighan), saying whatever filthy things are really on their minds, which was usually sex.

Aside from occasional pacing problems and technical difficulties with the soundtrack, the show ran quite smoothly. MacGregor and Deighan were very well-cast and seemed to enjoy themselves immensely on stage. Vincent and MacLean were also comfortable in their roles and their introvertedness provided sufficient contrast to their shameless ids. The dialogue of the ids was shockingly funny, which more often than not sits rather well with university students. Overall, great show.

These were definitely the best set of one acts UPEI TS has produced since I've been here and probably many years before that. The plays were all very appropriate for a university audience, featuring characters and situations to which students can relate, not to mention the fact that all the plays were comedic and somewhat intelligent. For the first time in years, the low budget of the plays wasn't evident on the stage. The Theatre Society adapted commendably to the amphitheatre's limitations as a performance venue, making it less offensive to the eyes than I had believed possible. Well worth the five dollars.



Deighan addressing the crowd as to the perils of women