

ARTS & VARIETY

Theatre Preview: The Hypochondriac

BY RYAN SKILLE

AFTER THE WILD excitement of Jesus Christ Superstar and the wide variety of the student-directed one-acts, the CSP theatre department takes a break from its more serious lineup and moves on to something a bit more silly for the spring play this year. “The Hypochondriac,” also known by its original name, “The Imaginary Invalid,” was written by the French playwright, actor, and poet, Molière, in 1673. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, also known by his stage name, Molière, was hugely popular in the 1600s in Europe for his hilariously political and irreverent comedies. Molière suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis, and he actually collapsed in a fit of coughing and hemorrhaging while on stage in the middle of performing this exact play. He insisted on continuing the performance but collapsed again and was taken home where he died a few hours later. Dramatists, being superstitious by nature, passed this story into legend and the color green (the color Molière was wearing when he died) became a symbol of bad luck. “The Imaginary Invalid” was the last play he wrote, and this circumstance is especially ironic when you consider the content of the play.

This show pairs perfectly with modern times. The show revolves around an

old man named Argan (Nathan Kleppe) who is a hypochondriac, meaning he always believes there is something medically wrong with him and he requires constant medical attention even though there may not be any actual ailments. Argan has just promised his daughter (Grace Czywczynski) in marriage to the nephew of one of his doctors, but she is in love with another man already. She conspires with the crafty maid (Erika Soukup) and they have goofy adventures trying to get themselves out of silly situations.

The show features lots of hijinks and funny dialogue between characters and will be an uproarious time for any audience member to view. The show will also feature original music composed by seniors Scott Ockowig and Ryan Skille. Justin Hooper, the director of the CSP production, says that he has been excited about putting this together for a long time. The show will debut in the Blackbox Theatre on February 17th through February 20th. The audience will be asked to wear masks if they can. Actors will also be masked for performances. This will doubtless be a wonderful experience peppered with lots of gaffs and guffaws.

Musical Review: "Come From Away"

BY KACIE DUNCAN

THE FEELING OF ANIMATION when seeing the lit-up title of the night’s show as I walk towards the Orpheum is the same feeling I have always gotten. When I take my seat to watch “Come From Away,” I am foot-tapping eager with expectations set rather high. For all of us theater lovers, most of us have had our expectations... not met during a show. While we know the feeling of leaving a show disappointed, we also know the feeling of leaving a show that has met every single one of your expectations. I was lucky enough to walk away from this show with the latter.

“Come From Away” is a unique touring Broadway production of a story set in Gander, Newfoundland. On September 11, 2001, all American flights in the sky were ordered to immediately land, in a safety measure following the attack on the World Trade Centers. This resulted in 38 planes landing in the small town of Gander, where a town of around 9,600 people, had to abruptly make room for nearly 7,000 people over the course of the days following 9/11. In this beautiful and heartfelt story, “Come From Away” captures the heartbreak and devastation following this moment in history while also capturing the beautiful moments of human connection that are born out of tragedy.

Rather than the typical 2-hour play with a 15-minute intermission, the run time sits at 100 minutes with no intermission. While initially, this sounds like a long time to sit without a glass of water or a bathroom break, once the show starts there is nothing else on your mind. The fast-moving pace among the cast alone is enough to keep you awake and ready for the next scene. The entire cast is on the stage the majority of the time due to the fact that a single actor plays at least two main roles and several other background characters. Outfit changes occur on the stage in front of the audience, with a simple hat and jacket changing Annette, a Gander school teacher, into Beverley Bass, one of the pilots forced to land their plane.

The story that it communicates is inspiring enough, but the production of this show goes a step further to truly make you feel connected to the story and the people. Songs such as “On The Edge” manage to capture honest human emotions and reactions such as the urge for people to turn against one another with suspicion of each other in times of fear. The song “Costume Party” beautifully illustrates the variety of different coping mechanisms that people use when working through a traumatic event. Some need normality with laughter and friendship to make it through tragedy. Others need acceptance and grieving, with normality feeling wrong for them. Neither of these ways of coping is right or wrong, they are simply different ways for human beings to work through life in a way that works for them. Despite the validity of both coping skills, they can cause friction among people who are using opposite approaches.

Outside of the beautiful music, lyrics, and production, there is endless praise



Photo Credit: Kacie Duncan

to be given for the adaptability of this cast. Three performances in a row were forced to be canceled due to illnesses with the original cast. Two of the leading performers were performed by standbys. The Sunday performance I attended was the first performance since their cancellations. The unfortunate three days prior had no effect on the quality of the performance. Both the original cast members and standbys performed seamlessly with every bit of emotion and talent as one would expect.

“Come From Away” is in every way, a wonderful touring Broadway production. From the story to the music, it leaves little room for improvement. The best advice I’ll ever give is that if you get the chance to see this wonderful production, please take it. Skip the Starbucks for a week and go buy yourself a ticket to the best hour and forty minutes of 2022.