

ARTS & VARIETY

Theater Spotlight: *Maurice Fields III*

BY ALEXANDRIA GOSEN

IMAGINE BEING FROZEN for twenty-nine years, unaware of your surroundings, time, or anything outside your being. One day you wake up in an unfamiliar room with bright lights, and there is a man near, a man you do not know. It almost sounds like *Sleeping Beauty*, which is an interesting way to describe Harold Pinter's one act play, *A Kind of Alaska*.

In this show, we meet Barbra, a girl who became catatonic around what we believe to be age sixteen and woke up twenty-nine years later. She has slept through her family tragedies, World War II, and several other milestones in her life. Director Maurice Fields III explained that the play itself is the story of Barbara's sister and Doctor attempting to find a way to fill in the blanks of Barbra's life; As Barbra asks more questions, the blanks in her life become harder to fill.

This show is very complex, and is complemented with a simple set in a intimate setting which. Really immerses you in the story. Cast with Kallie Jo Aschman, Anna Haselmann, and Ryan Skille;, the show is very small but powerful. It made me question several things, as every good production does. Harold Pinter's script does not offer many answers, but it does open your mind to contemplation and reflection.

As previously stated, this show was directed by CSP student Maurice Fields III. He is known for his dancing, acting, and dark sense of humor, but was highly successful at this role as well. There is a lot of mental preparation that goes into any field within the realm of the theater. Fields says, "The biggest difference between preparing for acting and preparing for directing is you're not preparing yourself for engaging for the psychological activity of being another person while also trying to be yourself. As a director, you have to understand the full scope of everything, understanding why each character is important to the story."

Fields says he prefers directing: "I have a lot more fun doing it. I can see the play for what it truly is, from a directorial standpoint, and see it from the outsider's perspective instead of playing it myself. [Directing] is what I've always had an image of in my brain... I think my ideas are too big sometimes to continue doing acting. I would rather shape things than physically do them." †

Writer Spotlight: *Matthew Iung*

BY BROOKE STEIGAUF

MATTHEW IUNG DESCRIBES WRITING as "a thrill you can't get anywhere else." Despite his dedicated practice, the CSP senior still amazed at the ability to create something out of nothing. He explains, "These things that were once in my head are now on this page, and sometimes they even make sense!"

He is seeking to evoke emotion from his readers. "Terror, frustration, whatever; I want to elicit some kind of response." The English major describes his process as alternating between creating and consuming media. He spends time reading, watching TV, experiencing others' creative products before his inspiration is fueled.

His characters used to be based on people in his life, and his content was based on personal experiences as well. Over time, he has become more interested in fiction and fantasy, his characters becoming less tethered to his tangible world and growing more innovative. He describes character construction as a process of discovery. "Halfway through the creation of a character, you realize that you think this character is African American or sexist or likes to eat waffles at three in the morning."

Iung is currently the editorial intern for the speculative fiction section of the Los Angeles Review of Books and hoping to go to graduate school at the University of Southern Maine for creative writing. His creative involvement at

CSP has included his behind-the-scenes work as stage manager for theater productions and a Sword writer, primarily focused on subjects relating to the arts.

Iung is a snarky introvert who cures his writer's block by "caffeinating heavily." He is inspired by the works of James Baldwin, Alan Moore, Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, and China Miéville's *The Last Days of New Paris* (a book about surrealist paintings that come to life to fight Nazis). A highly worthwhile person to know, Iung's creativity becomes obvious through his writing and even casual conversation. "The newspaper couldn't publish half the sh*t I say," he says through a grin. †

Movie Review: *Climax*

BY MATTHEW IUNG

THE FILM WAS WRITTEN, all five pages of it, and directed by Gaspar Noé. For the most part, the actors are improving at embracing where the music and mood take them. *Climax* was awarded the Art Cinema Award at the Cannes Film Festival and was released in France in September of 2018.

It covers the story of a group of French dancers whose drinks are spiked with LSD during a party. The viewer joins the group for a rehearsal that is a part of a ten-minute single shot opening. There is a lot of talent on display as well as some beautiful camera work. After they finish, their party begins, and the viewer is introduced to the characters and their dynamics within the group. From there, things begin to unravel slowly, and for some, the tenuous holds they have on reality snaps fast. The viewer is dragged down the rabbit hole, but instead of coming out the other end into wonderland, they will find themselves in hell.

Climax's cinematography has a fluidity that is hard to find and takes its influence from director Stanley Kubrick and his films *Apocalypse Now* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The pacing of the descent in *Climax* is almost mythological in a way there is an otherworldly quality to it that is truly outside of life. This is very much like the long river ride in *Apocalypse Now* and the way that the film utilizes sound is almost the same in *2001 A Space Odyssey*. This practice is to make it so that the viewer is never without some kind of audio even if they are not fully aware of it. This is used to set the tone and more often than not to disturb, more than once the repetition of screaming is the base sound in a sequence.

Cross that feeling of the "other" with the sheer grotesqueness the imagery and of human nature on display, the film begins to resemble a Hunter S. Thompson "Fear and Loathing" story. While there is no journalism to *Climax*, even if it is based on a true story, it seeks the same truth that Thompson's did. Thompson's Gonzo reporting was the product of heavy drug use on the authors part as well as a blurring of the line between fact and fiction.

The final destination of both the Thompson and Noé work, however, as they got to the dark heart of humanity. The film does just that and leaves a few unanswered questions as well, not about what happened but why it happened the way it did. There are several developed characters that the viewer has the opportunity to watch transform, and whether their journey is central or off to the side, it makes for a fainting journey.

I highly recommend *Climax* to those who enjoy locked room mysteries and physiological horror as genres, as well as those who are into unique cinematography and the art of finding strange ways to represent mood through camera work. †