

DON'T READ THIS REVIEW

by Dr. Carl Holmberg

There is entertainment in Hazleton, at Highacres, 'cheap' for students (free), and, it's fun! On the evenings of April 25-28, two one act plays; "Sganarelle" by Moliere and "Episode in the Life of the Author" by Anouilh, were performed by students and staff in the Highacres Commons. These plays were right on for spring, but where were you, oh disembodied student who claims Hazleton and Highacres the land of pat, pet, pit, pot and put (as in patsies, for the dogs, a collection of pit stops, pot's pot, and put your foot on the gas and let's get out of here)?

"Sganarelle" was a laugh, for real; it was genuinely funny. It is one of those "old" plays you might read in Humanities I, but when your friends add life to it, it's much more like new beaujolais, tasty, nourishing, refreshing. This play concerns a series of misunderstandings for its plot: Nora Reichard as "Celie" was convincing as the woman told whom to marry by her chauvinest father, played by Dr. Joe Marchesani. Her first love, "Lelie" as played by Dave Pearson was frustrated in his love not only by her father but also by that accidental interloper, "Sganarelle," a comically boorish sot as performed by Glen Puhak. Sganarelle's wife was interpreted by Joan Varsics: she thought he was messing around with Celie while he

thought his wife was being too cozy with Lelie. So far all five characters didn't realize their problem but Celie's maid, Michele Baymore, did. Mark Manges was Lelie's fascinatingly skinny yet portly (both wine and gut portly) manservant, "Gros Rene." Mr. Jim White was Mme. Sganarelle's relative who advised Sganarelle to think twice before accusing her openly of infidelity. Dr. Carl Frankel as Villebrequin helped get lovers together when he proclaimed Celie free from marrying a character already married, presumably offstage.

Now if the plot or the fun escapes you, I'm sorry you couldn't be there. It was very well done, but I find it difficult to share the enjoyment with you: You had to be there; and I'm sure there was at least one person like you, reader, there; the audience I watched watch liked the play very much. The audience also liked the second play.

"Episode in the Life of an Author" is one of those plays which is hard to perform. By the end, all characters are on stage, each doing his or her thing in seeming disharmony with the others. Even though there were some minor stretches of timing (e.g., the phone is ringing but no one has called yet), the play was a success because each performer harmoniously helped to depict one of those times when nothing goes right. Besides, phones do weird things anyway.

The main character whose roof leaks and whose world tumbles down on top of him was Mark Peterson, "The Author." His day seemed to start out relatively no different than others; his maid (Michelle Baymor) is crying and his wife, Ardele (Kathleen Zellner) is leaving. This is interrupted by a Rumanian journalist. Mme. Bessarabo (Stephanie Franz), who wants to get the picture, but he with the Mme. are themselves interrupted frequently in their endeavor by wife, maid, and phone calls: Kathy Abott played an anonymous woman who wants to speak to "Leon," a guy who doesn't exist in the story; Carol Eames was the "Friend" who called for critical advice about a film script. Then it got worse for the hero. His mother (Suze Kemper) arrived brandishing ads for flats for rent and sale; she thinks, evidently that he doesn't know that this is mostly an excuse to see her dear little boy and to aggravate his wife. Next the "Housing Inspector" (Randine Matthews) paid a visit to tell the author that his house is too big for him and that the government will supply him with new roomies. Somehow, other tenants arrived, but not the ones just mentioned, like three plumbers (Alvina Lapcoskie, Joyce Minor, and Lisa Morano) who explored for the cause of a rather punctiliously editorial water leak which dripped from the ceiling more and more as the

play progressed; like "La Surette" (Gerry Nork) who wanted a hand out and asked the maid for it; like "Gontran" (Dom Morollo) who burned himself out explaining how -- well, he never got that far before he collapsed.

Due to the players' skill, only then did the plot get confusing. All characters were on stage, holding some kind of receptacle to catch water leaking from the ceiling, jostling about, yelling, accusing, shooting (pictures and gun), crying, lying and lying and more . . . And that's way I think the audience identified with the "author" in this play; sometimes our reality is like this. The play was enjoyed also because it was well done, and oh, did I forget to mention that each character had a nose a' la Bergerac which stunned the audience into nasal expectation of each new character's entrance?

All in all, Mrs. Moyer, who directed "Sganarelle," and Mr. Breckenridge, who directed "Episode," should be praised for their care, time, and ingenuity. The players should be thanked for proving their fellow students full of bologna in thinking nothing quality and interesting ever happens at Highacres. Finally, the production staff and the drama steering committee should be given a hearty thanks for aiding and abetting pleasure.

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