

One woman play gets mixed reviews

"Miss Margarida's Way", a one woman play, starring Jamie Caffier, was performed August 26 and 27, at the campus auditorium.

The play is an allegory about the military dictatorship of Brazil during the 60's and 70's. It's format is a dialogue (monologue?) between Miss Margarida (on stage), who is an eighth-grade schoolteacher, and her class (the audience).

The following are two reactions to the play:

Scott Demko
Capital Times Staff

As the spotlight comes on, one hears the sound of an uncontrollable, loud and slashing voice. A few minutes later, you wonder if you should have stayed home.

"Miss Margarida's Way" is a controversial play about totalitarianism written by Brazilian playwright Roberto Athayde in 1973. The play was banned or censored in several countries because of the "harsh nature" of its contents. Unhappy with others interpretations of his play, Athayde in 1977 decided to direct his own play, insisting on the use of audience participation.

As a participant and an innocent bystander, many things entered my mind as I watched the performance. I experienced rage, anger, and hatred. I felt like the smallest person in the world. It down-graded me and made me feel unwanted in society.

As in any dictatorship, "Miss Margarida's Way" is the only way.

You must accept her as she is or you are considered an outcast.

She thinks only of herself and shows little or no respect for others. Because of her totalitarian ways, Miss Margarida cannot make the distinction between herself and others. I also felt that she exploits the element of human sexuality. To her, everyone else is sexually inferior.

As the play drew to a close, I felt that my intelligence was insulted. I had the distinct impression that I was at the mercy of Miss Margarida "ways". The play violated many of my moral and ethical values.

Sondra Kinsey
Capital Times Staff

Athayde was right in insisting on audience involvement for his play.

Without the captive audience's frustration with impotence, "Miss Margarida's Way" might become simply a comedic caricature of power gone berserk.

The truisms of the dynamics between the powerful few and the powerless masses--and their effects--might be lost in the performance strength of actress Jamie Caffier and the force of the language.

The play is, after all, about more than the corruption of power. It is equally about the effects of oppression. Miss Margarida, herself, is an effect of oppression, as witnessed by referring to herself as another person.

The kernels of truth in Miss Margarida's simplistic paranoid projections are funny. (Law of history--"Everyone wants to dominate everyone else.") Audience reduction to infantile helplessness is not. ("I am your wife, your mother, your all.") Only civilized detachment makes it seem so. At one point she says, "I will help you to become impotent." The statement is absurd because it runs counter to healthy life-direction. The theme echoes in "Evolution is nothing; revolution is two times nothing."

Craziness only begets craziness. The audience is more acutely aware of that craziness through their identification with themselves as dependent, impressionable and questing eighth-grade students.

Her lines, "You are nothing" and "Gratitude is the greatest of all qualities" could have been fed to black slaves over 100 years ago--or pre-liberated women. But today, the passive hopelessness of "The deserving ones are they who obey" would not hold up against the active hope of "carpe diem" (seize the day) of *Dead Poets Society*.

In using the play as an allegory and audience reaction as the message, I think the author is saying that society cannot allow such a disparity in power. Such a society will ultimately destroy itself through its violation of human dignity.

Caffier, who plays Miss Margarida, is a Penn State Harrisburg graduate student of humanities with a B.F.A. in Theatre from Ohio University. She currently teaches English, Drama, and Public Speaking at Central Dauphin East High School. She directs and participates in every school production.

Poetry contest

Poets may enter the American Poetry Association's nationwide contest now. Over \$11,000 in prizes will be awarded to 152 winners. Entry is free and everyone is welcome to enter.

The Grand Prize is \$1,000 and the First Prize is \$500. Other prizes include cash awards and publication.

"Students walked away with 24 prizes in our last contest," said Robert Nelson, publisher for the Association. "I urge every student who writes poetry to enter now--before studies and exams take up your time. Young people with talent should get encouragement while they are still young."

Poets may enter the contest by sending up to six poems, each no more than 20 lines, name and address on each page, to American Poetry Association, Dept. CT-70, 250-A Potrero Street, P.O. Box 1803, Santa Cruz, CA 95061-1803. Poems must be postmarked by December 31.

Each poem is also considered for publication in the American Poetry Anthology, a leading collection of contemporary verse.

During seven years of sponsorship the American Poetry Association has run 32 contests and awarded over \$145,000 in prizes to 3,040 winning poets.

Join the *Capital Times* Staff

Any student interested in reporting, photography, graphics, advertising, or just helping out, should come to the staff meeting on Thursday, September 14 at 12:30 p.m. in Olmsted, room W337.

Folk Singer David Harris will perform in the Sculpture Garden on Friday Sept. 15 at 12:00 noon.

He's performed a variety of styles, from rock to reggae. *Music Connection Magazine* said of him, "His vocals are rich, emotional and convincing . . . His songs always contain sophistication and subtlety."

He recently released a 4 song E.P, "Money and Things," and last year he toured with the "30th Anniversary of Rock and Roll" Summer Road Show '88.

Rain location is the Black Cultural Arts Center.

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