

NRT penis production to discuss the hard issues

By Cayla Rasi
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It's been 10 years since the first "Penis Monologues," and you still don't need a penis to get aroused by the show.

It's a raunchy production, and that's the way organizers like it.

"The show is definitely rated R," Jason Cassidy said. "I wouldn't bring a kid to the show, but the average college kid isn't going to be too shocked."

Cassidy, Class of 2003, is the original writer for "The Penis Monologues" and has been adding to and editing the show over the years.

"I wrote the show in 2000 during my sophomore year and it was just an experiment to see if I could write a show like this — something silly and funny based on peoples' experiences," Cassidy said.

Director Glenn "Buddy" Ruse said the monologues have a wide range of penis stories — from peeing to erectile dysfunction to STDs. With an "in-your-face experience," the informal show will entertain students with penis topics of all types.

This is the first year No Refund Theatre (NRT) will take over the show, picking up where the Outlaws Playwright Theatre left off after nine years of running the production.

Cassidy said NRT is taking over for a few reasons: Open auditions were held so any student could try out for the show; and instead of having only women direct the show, there are both male and female directors.

Ruse said his favorite monologue deals with a virgin who discovers he has a non-sexual STD.

If you go

What: "The Penis Monologues"

When: 10 tonight, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Where: 111 Forum

Details: Admission is free.

Actor Nick Mittereder acts out this specific monologue.

"Yup, that's me, the virgin with the STD," Mittereder (senior-broadcast journalism) said. "According to the show, it's possible to be a virgin with an STD, but I'm not a biology major so I wouldn't know if it could happen in real life ... But this guy, he notices problems while urinating and goes to a doctor to figure it out, and all of the shenanigans that happen at the doctors office to attempt to figure out what's going on is hilarious."

Even though this specific monologue may be a bit of a stretch, Mittereder said it's so funny no one in the audience will care.

The actors will interact with the crowd instead of just standing on the stage for the entire performance. There's plenty of walking around for the performers during their monologues to make the audience feel they are involved in the storytelling, Mittereder said.

The topic may be geared toward guys, but that hasn't stopped girls from attending the monologues in its past incarnations.

"A lot of my friends that are girls have gone to the show and

they loved it," Ruse said. "It's dealing with the stereotypes of men — and no one appreciates the stereotypes of men more than girls."

Last year, the actors took the stage at the end of the show in nothing but their underwear.

Ruse said this year's group is planning a few surprises, but nothing is definite yet, though there will be moments similar to the boxer and tightie-whities display.

"Guys will be going out on stage and making orgasm noises and acting out masturbation without pulling out their penis," he said. "If it works out right, it's going to be a funny moment in the play."

Since "The Penis Monologues" started a decade ago, Cassidy's show will be interpreted differently than it has been in the past — with updated stories and a new crop of performers.

"I was a different person 10 years ago than I am today," Cassidy said. "I have a bit of a disconnect because I guess I'm grown up in a sense ... it's a very good view of how I thought when I was in college and in my 20s. I like how it reminds me of who I was back in the days."

In Cassidy's favorite skit, three guys talk about what type of animal they think their penises are — suggesting pythons and lions, Cassidy said.

"It's crude and ridiculous and people are going to sympathize for how insecure men are," he said. "It's such a self-deprecating and very insightful look at how insecure and self-conscious men are about their sexuality and their bodies — in a humorous and light-hearted way."

"People may come to a realization of how frightened men are about sex and talking about their bodies and they just put on this tough face," Cassidy said.

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Christine Reckner/Daily Collegian

Students practice their skits for "The Penis Monologues" during a rehearsal Monday night in Forum. No Refund Theatre will perform the show, which was written by a Penn State student, for the 10th year this weekend.

