

The original vampire returns

By Julie Mastrine
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Move over, Edward Cullen: Dracula's back.

The State College Community Theatre will perform Steven Dietz's "Dracula" at 8 tonight through Sunday at the Boal Barn Playhouse, 300 Old Boalsburg Rd.

The Friday and Saturday showings will also include midnight performances. Tickets for the show will be sold at the door for \$10.

The play comes just in time for Halloween and will please those looking for a scare, said stage manager Katie Carriero, Class of 2010.

"I'd actually never seen a live horror play, but I was pleasantly surprised with how this one turned out," she said. "It is really fun to watch and will definitely freak you out. It does its job and is perfect for Halloween weekend."

The play required some difficult special effects, particularly during a scene in which two of Dracula's Vixens eat a baby, she said.

The challenge of putting on a successful horror play lies beyond the effects, School of Theatre professor Annie McGregor said.

"In live theater, there has to be a particular kind of horror that doesn't rely only on special effects or the camera as a medium, but the story or the acting," she said. "It has to rely on the idea of the supernatural that intrigues you."

Bram Stoker's novel about the famous vampire's story was published in 1897, and though the story of Dracula is over a century old, it has lasting power as a play because of the different personalities that are revealed, Carriero said.

"There are many different motivations in the characters. The adaptation depends on how you personally see it," she said. "No matter how many times you see 'Dracula,' you will always be able to make it a different experience."

Though writers were initially afraid that the book was "too weird to be onstage," Dietz, whose play was published in 1996, found a way to make it more true to its original form, said Gordon Robinson, the show's director. This made Dietz's version of the play a good choice for the Community Theatre, he said.

Actors said different versions of the play allow for various types of interpretations.

Dracula can be played in a straightforward way or with a comedic twist, said Cat Eskey, who plays the role of Lucy, one of Dracula's victims, in the play.

"We decided to play it straight, so there is a lot of seriousness going on," said Eskey, a senior at State College Area High School. "You have to watch out for overacting, especially because there's a lot of screaming going on, especially for my role. It was definitely challenging vocally."

Dracula was first brought to the stage in the 1920s, Robinson said.

Though the play found success both on stage and in cinematic form, audiences said the adaptations had strayed from Stoker's version, he said.

"After some time, a lot of people started to reexamine that the version being done on stage was far different from the book version," said Robinson, 38, a resident of State College. "Theatre audiences were becoming more sophisticated. They wanted to do things like break the fourth wall and all of the




Courtesy of IMDb.com

Dracula was made into a movie in 1992.

things that the book originally did but were being ignored."

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