

The Samaritan Syndrome

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Produced by Brikenbrak Theatre Project

Written by Jeremy Menekseoglu

Directed by Paul Cosca

Original music by David Rosenburry

Sickness behind a Samaritan

In a play that follows one man's attempt to locate and help a young teenage girl whom his father manipulated and molested over 9 years ago, we see the selfishness and sickness that can be behind the act of helping others



A young man, Mr. Suit (Anthony Stamilio,) has come to an Asylum for girls that are beyond emotional repair looking for a specific girl in which he claims he must save. He comes across numerous other female patients that are pleading for help, but he chooses to ignore or hurt them by falling victim to his own devious desires and taking advantage of their insecurities. Even after he has been warned by the night nurse (April Taylor) that he will never be able to help the specific girl (Pepper) that he is trying to find, he continues until he finds her. There is no happy ending to this play, as we see both people unable to save each other and that a life long pain will never leave them.

Gorilla Tango's intimate setting and cold brick walls give Brikenbrak Theatre Project a perfect setting to compliment the script. Most shows at Gorilla Tango tend to forfeit a set for their show because it must be taken down and removed at the end of each performance.



Director Paul Cosca uses a simplistic, but tangible set to create the different locations of the psychiatric ward. The single table set underneath a bare bulb creates the appropriate emotional atmosphere for the night nurse and Mr. Suit to meet and discuss plans.

This story touches on interesting themes of samaritanism. Who is helping who and what is their motive? The author Jeremy Menekseoglu closely ties sexuality and the desire for Mr. Suit to help others as every patient is female and in the end we see it is Mr. Suit who is looking to be saved and loved. In each encounter with the wrong girl we see Mr. Suit struggle with his own internal manipulation to justify his actions.

The characters in this play are underdeveloped and 2 dimensional at best and the dialogue feels rushed and out of touch with the character's emotions. The untold back stories of each character have the strongest impact on the story creating an eerie ambiguity as to what each individual's motives are. The young cast might lack some veteran stage presence. Each actor seemed fully committed in their own role, but not of the whole picture. The conversations and dialogue come off flat, as if they are not listening to one another. Their reactions are too premeditated. The darkness, morbidity and internal drama within this play can be better brought out with more natural chemistry on stage. Claire Kander (Ada) had the most intriguing role to me and she was fully committed to her role and brought to life an untold story through her display of emotional depth. Sarah Grant (Grace) and April Taylor (Night Nurse) also showed a great deal of commitment to their character and bring out some surprising qualities.

The professionalism and passion of Brikenbrak Theatre Project stands out at this performance and is worth your 45 minutes. The short talk backs are especially interesting with such a tight audience. Playing on a typical off-night this is a good opportunity to try something new. While the show is short and sweet, it will keep you thinking and talking about it all week.

Recommended

Timothy McGuire

Date Reviewed: May 4, 2010