

Twisted play proves successful

BY JOHN O'BRIEN
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Chock full of blood, cuts, broken bones and vomit, the current production of "Gruesome Playground Injuries" might not be a pretty sight, but it certainly is beautiful to watch.

Directed by senior Jeff Denight, the lab show production, which opens tonight, is a twisted success.

"Gruesome Playground Injuries," which was written by Rajiv Joseph and was premiered at the Alley Theatre during 2009 in Houston, Texas, follows the interactions of Kayleen and Doug, two masochistic friends who reconnect with each bruise, cut or break they suffer. The play is presented as a set of scenes, which travel back and forth in time within the characters' lives between their ages eight and 38.

While it might seem difficult to make an emotional and tender play about masochists, Joseph seems to do it with ease, infusing heavy emotional contrast and delicate moments into most of the scenes. The script makes heavy use of symbolism and contains a level of depth that can provoke thought, but at the same time leave audiences confused.

Starting with the "No, my scar is worse" competition so common amongst children, the play takes this battle of scars to a new level as Kayleen and Doug travel into their late 30s and suffer from injuries ranging from minor to life threatening injuries.



Scott Skarvan/Index

Sophomore Zach Venturella, left, and junior Rene Robischoeu, right, perform a scene during a "Gruesome Playground Injuries" dress rehearsal Tuesday in the Ophelia Parrish Black Box Theatre. The play proved successful thanks to thoughtful direction, talented acting and strong design.

Denight seemed to understand and interpret the text in a way that led to a well-thought-out, detail-oriented and thought-provoking production. The production's technical aspects meld well with the script and strong acting to make the production an overall success.

The two-person cast consisting of junior Rene Robischoeu as Kayleen and sophomore Zach Venturella as Doug presented a raw, grotesque, yet surprisingly tender and beautiful performance. Robischoeu and Venturella create vivid characters and show strong contrast in emotion and age, starting the production playing 8-year-olds

and ending as 38-year-olds.

Venturella, who began the play sporting a gash over his eye and ending with an eye patch and in a wheelchair, held his own and presented a fairly twisted portrayal of Doug, relishing in each injury and taking joy in comparing scars.

Although Venturella performed at an impressive level, Robischoeu presented a performance that will be difficult for leading actors in upcoming productions to match. Robischoeu's emotional contrast made her dark character grotesque, beautiful, comical and heart-breaking. With a performance that is sure to send chills down

the audience's spines, Robischoeu served as one of the production's strongest assets.

While a majority of the production's emotion came from the actors, the technical aspects of the production successfully provided it with another layer of depth.

Senior Paige Hackworth's scene designs consisting of multilevel boxes were simple, yet appropriate for the quickly changing scenes. The actors drew with chalk around the set to create images or write words matching the upcoming scene or injury. This concept helped create the tone of scenes and add to the set while creatively setting the scene.

The costume designs by senior Katrina Godfrey were appropriate for each scene and made for relatively quick costume changes, which took place onstage between every scene. During the onstage costume changes, actors also applied well-designed and realistic makeup designed by senior Nat Wrhel to create whatever injury took place in that particular scene, whether it be cuts on a thigh, an empty eye socket or a missing tooth.

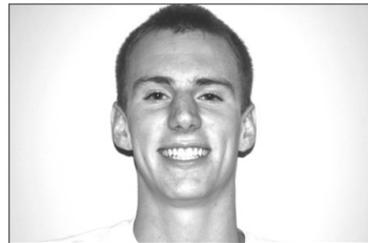
Aside from occasional moments when actors walked into dark spots, the lighting by seniors Brendan Gregg and Mandy Schultz accurately set the scene and followed actors from location to location on stage while setting the mood. The quick lighting changes were accompanied well with junior Kristine St. Gemme's sound design, which also helped set the scene through use of sound effects and a well-put-together modern playlist.

Although Denight's production of "Gruesome Playground Injuries" might not be best for audiences younger than 14 or the weak of stomach due to language, partial nudity and gore, the show was a twisted, mutilated success worth seeing — blood, guts and all.

The production runs tonight through Saturday in the Ophelia Parrish Black Box Theatre. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and the production starts at 8 p.m. Admission is free.

This review is based on the Oct. 23 dress rehearsal.

Donating time more helpful than money



BY JOHN BROOKS
Staff Reporter

To say there are a few tables on The Quad would be an understatement. It seems like every time I walk to class, someone who's trying to raise money for this group or that set of people who need help asks me to donate. I don't really think giving my money helps that much in most cases. I believe people would be better served if most of us took the time to actually spend time with people who are hurting or in need, and serve them directly. I would venture to say that giving money is the easy route. Sometimes it allows people to feel like they have contributed without actually sacrificing anything.

Poverty, death, suffering and destruction always will exist, despite anything you try to do about them. They're elements of the human condition. Greed is one of those elements. Any time money is involved, people will do what they can to get their hands on it. Given that these facts are true, I often wonder whether giving money to the various charities we see represented genuinely helps at all. I don't question money's power to help. It can buy food and clothing, it can mean the difference between the lights being on and off, it literally can be the difference between life and death for people.

But it also can corrupt people. Although there are people not as easily influenced by money, others will do anything for it. There are non-profits with corporate jets. There are churches that spend millions of dollars on huge buildings with expensive projectors and sound systems. I don't understand how

people can sit in their comfortable pews at optimal temperatures and feel they are living out their religion. Why not meet in a warehouse and give the money away? Because that would be uncomfortable, and we don't have to be uncomfortable in America. Members of my social class — most of us here at Truman State — don't understand what uncomfortable means. Uncomfortable means not knowing how you're going to buy that next pack of diapers for your kids. Uncomfortable means going to bed hungry and being kept up by your stomach growling.

There are people right here in Kirksville who are hurting. People who need our help. People who are hungry and who need clothes for winter. Why is it so easy to put money in a can and feel like we're helping? Because actually helping people is hard. It's hard to put in time and effort with people and often see no results. During high school I worked in the A+ program, tutoring kids at an elementary school. I spent hours trying to help children improve their grammar and spelling, and at the end of the summer they were still making the same mistakes as they were at the start. Some of them were taking classes during the summer because it was their parents' form of daycare. In most cases their parents weren't involved in their lives at all.

It is easy to ignore or to simply forget there are people with less advantages than we have. We are so incredibly privileged to attend college. Am I saying anything original here? Probably not. Sometimes it helps me to be reminded of things I've heard before. Sometimes it helps me get off my butt, and that's what I wish more people would do. If you genuinely care about people, then don't just give money. Do more. Look for ways to help people. If you have time, volunteer at the food bank. Ask your parents for old coats to bring back after Thanksgiving break and donate them to a local organization. Do something. Poverty and suffering always will exist, and we can't change that fact. We can, however, try anyway. But we must do so in an effective form, and to me, helping people in person in addition to simply donating small amounts of money is a far better way to try.

Politics play a major role in our society



Editor's passion for politics has larger benefits for community members

BY ASHLEY JOST
News Editor
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I love politics. I love the rush of not knowing what will happen. I love meeting the politicians, hearing about their stances and most importantly, why they are running for office. I even love the hundreds of emails sent to voters from their campaign managers.

Yeah, that last one was a little facetious, but I promise the other two were true.

I commend people who have the courage to put the facet of their lives in front of the public eye so they can fight to try to make whatever differences they think they can in office. I also commend the patient families behind those politicians who go through the same open scrutiny.

Clearly, I couldn't do what politicians do. I'm the one who wants to know about their lives, the way their campaigns operate and what motivates them.

It's a good thing we don't mimic our political reporting in the Index after that of certain mass media markets, because then we would be trying to figure out who would win based on

whose pin on their lapel was larger, and frankly, my dear, I don't give a ... well, you know.

We have the chance to see a different side of politics at the grassroots level. Sure there still are some of the larger issues that are a part of national races, such as campaign contributions, but local politicians have the chance to show the heart behind their stances.

They can use their years of experience living in the area and work directly with their 35,000 constituents during an almost daily basis.

Next week, the news section of the Index will be devoted to this political process as we preview the upcoming week's elections.

We're going to spend the next week-and-a-half delving into state ballot measures, local campaign financing, advertisement in the district and features about the campaign managers. And I hope you read it front to back.

Considering recent efforts to register students to vote, I think next week's paper especially will be an important read for those students who might have switched their registration to Adair County to help make educated ballot decisions Nov. 6.

I'm a strong advocate for students and their right to vote in Adair County. We pay property taxes through rent rates and other local sales tax that benefits things like sidewalk and street construction, and have just about equal investment in the outcome of the races when things like higher education and the job market for graduates are such crucial issues.

To students I say: get educated. Time is running out. Be confident when you walk into your designated voting place on Nov. 6. You might not share my passion for politics, but you certainly share the investment in the outcome.

It's Time.

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