

TALENT SHINES IN YVONNE THEATER

'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' soars high

By David Maccar
News Editor

Review

It is rare that a stage adaptation of a popular film, which was adapted from a popular book, exceeds the story-telling capability of said film. The Department of Fine Arts' production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, however, does just that.

As theatergoers file into their seats in the Yvonne Theater, the curtain is not drawn, the stage is not dark. Rather it is brightly lit with actors fumbling about. The stark setting of a "day room in a ward of a state mental hospital somewhere in the Pacific Northwest in the 1960s" is artfully conveyed with utilitarian furniture and an abundance of chain-link fencing.

The play begins with a voice-over from Chief Bromden (Rider alumnus Joseph F. Geitner), quoted directly from Ken Kesey's landmark novel of the same name. Immediately the audience is drawn into the limited yet expansive world of a group of mental patients with diverse ailments that range in severity.

There is a pair of vegetative "incurables" (Chad Schubert and Brian Marchesi) sitting extremely still in wheelchairs and Chief standing stock still with his head hanging as a blue filter comes up and the sound of some distant, eternal machinery can be heard. Enter the world of the insane.

If one looks for faults in the performance, they may be found but only if one looks incredibly closely.

The stuttering, suicidal and painfully shy character of Billy Bibbit is strikingly portrayed by freshman Danny Lane, whose fearful mannerisms and

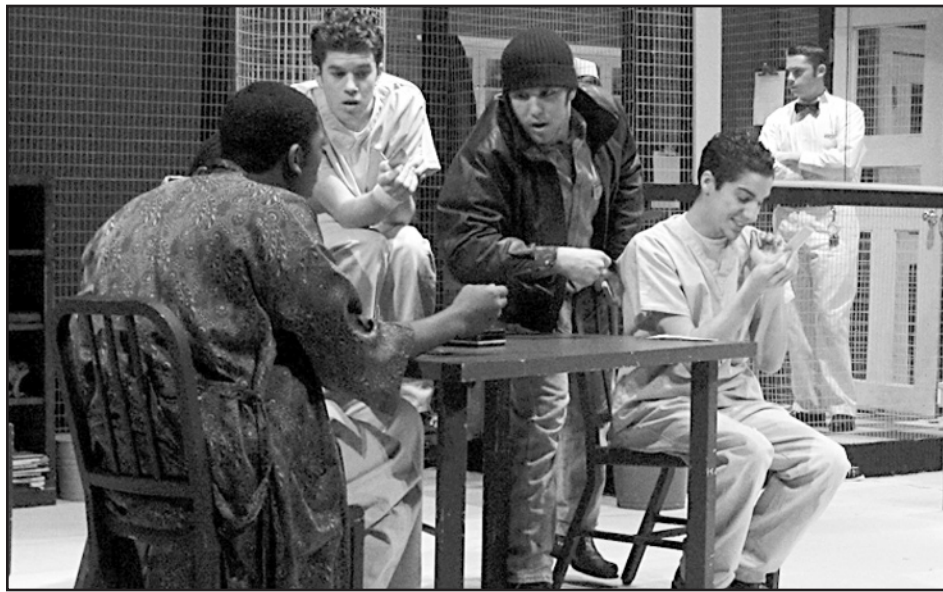


Photo by Hugh Tsung

(From left) Freshmen Bjorn Stowers, Danny Lane, Ed Egan and David Yashin portray insane patients in a mental institution, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. This group is proof of the fresh new talent in this year's freshmen class.

tentative speech is a dead ringer for Brad Dourif's portrayal in the film version. The only fault in Lane's performance may be that one could say it was too close to Dourif's performance, but it was the most effective way to tell the story of his character.

Contrastively, the brash, energetic and abrasive character of Randall P. McMurphy is well played by freshman Ed Egan.

Occasionally, Egan gets lost in his character and is a bit slow in conveying the emotions of individual scenes, but he always comes through in the end.

The character of McMurphy is a demanding one in that it is a very strong character, which creates a difficulty in expressing softer emotions. Egan seems to have some difficulty drifting into

these softer emotions, which is not an easy task, but he ultimately pulls it off.

The antagonist of the story, Nurse Ratched (sophomore Kim Hausler) is a wonderfully played heartless woman who deeply buries her emotions and gradually is worn down by McMurphy throughout the play. She reaches her breaking point near the end, only to come back with a display of stunning cruelty.

The performances of the supporting cast are so good that many scenes are stolen by them. Junior Justin Beazer's hyperactive, introverted Cheswick is artfully played and nicely contrasts with the more restrained character of Dale Harding (Bjorn Stowers) and the squeaking, neurotic character of Martini (David Yashin).

'American' vows exchanged in BLC Theater

By Lacey Korevec
Entertainment Editor

Review

Just when it seems that filmmakers have already used every unconventional sexual situation for a cheap laugh, *American Wedding* was released, proving that—oh yes—there are plenty more.

Jason Biggs returns as Jim to provide fans with a third helping of the hysterical *American Pie* gang; however, this one is centered on the marriage of Jim and "band geek" Michelle (Alyson Hannigan).

The film starts off with an unorthodox proposal and from there the laughs are non-stop, except for perhaps one scene involving Steve Stifler (Seann William Scott) that may make viewers a little queasy.

As characters plan for the big day, the family members of Jim and Michelle collide, all while Stifler and Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) battle for the attention of Michelle's younger, seemingly wholesome sister Cadence (January Jones).

Unlike the first two films, in this one the camera is, for the most part, focused solely on Stifler. Writers seemed to sacrifice Stifler's authenticity in *American*

Wedding for a few extra laughs, making his behavior over-the-top. Still, Scott's performance is hilarious because, let's face it, as much as the world does not want to admit it, hearing someone say the "F-word" three times per sentence still makes people laugh.

The unexplained absence of one of the main characters, Oz (Chris Klein), is the film's missing link. Playing the most endearing character of the bunch and proving that even a jock has a heart; Oz had a key part in completing the circle of friends in both *American Pie* and *American Pie II*. In the third, however, his character seems to be MIA and is not even mentioned.

Another disappointment, which is really no shocker, is the performance given by Hannigan, who is clearly in the wrong profession. She delivers her character for yet a third time with an unrealistically high-pitched voice, making it difficult not to be annoyed by her. And since this film gently strays away from its dirty-teenage-comedy predecessors and falls more into the dirty-romantic-comedy genre, its lack of a likeable female lead really takes its toll.

There is no surprise ending to this

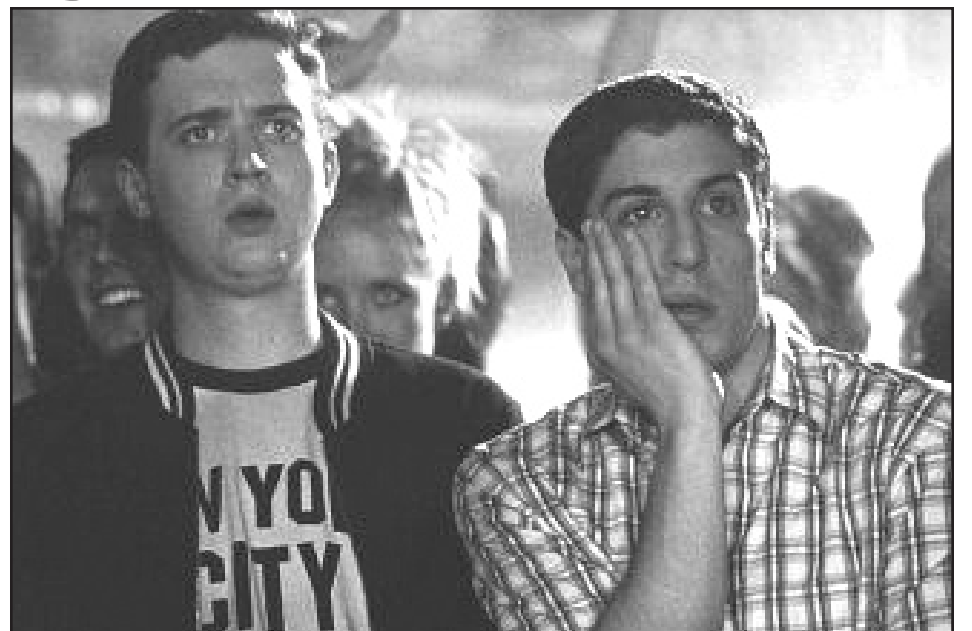


Photo copyright Universal Pictures

Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) and Jim (Jason Biggs) watch in shock as their friend Stifler (Seann William Scott) competes in a man to man dance off in *American Wedding*. The film will be playing in the BLC Theater this weekend.

saga. It is easy to predict the next joke as everything unravels, which somehow works to the film's advantage, making every scene that much funnier because viewers can foresee the boundaries that each sick joke will cross.

This film may make viewers queasy, but it is good for a laugh nonetheless.

A special degree of appreciation should go to sophomore Matt Cook, who played Ruckley, the lobotomized patient with a crucifixion complex. Cook spent many scenes holding his arms out to his sides and standing completely still, never once breaking character.

This same praise can be given to Geitner, whose Chief was played with the perfect degree of introverted lunacy in the beginning of the show and blossomed into the most emotionally touching character in the play.

In fact, the entire cast did a magnificent job of staying completely in character, constantly observing the foreign body language, movements and speech patterns of mentally deranged individuals.

Towards the end of the performance, the show's pace seemed to slow unnecessarily, slightly breaking the mood and creating a somewhat unrealistic delay in the action.

These small criticisms aside, the show is, as a whole, an enveloping and engaging performance that left the audience feeling as though they had shared a truly unique experience.

The stage adaptation was written by Dale Wasserman, who also wrote the musical *Man of La Mancha* for Broadway.

The final two performances of the play will be held on Friday, Nov. 21, and Saturday, Nov. 22, at 8 p.m. in the Yvonne Theater. Tickets are \$10 for guests and \$5 for students, faculty and staff.

And do not be fooled into believing that just because it is the third installment of the *American Pie* trilogy it is not worth seeing.

Pie may be old news at this point, but there is always cake, chocolate syrup and plenty of other desserts for filmmakers to use for a dirty laugh.