

Entertainment

GLT's 'The Foreigner' both entertains and enlightens

By John Sommer
Special to HHTW

The story is a fairy tale. An old woman, a young heiress, a half-wit, and a blameless fool get together and defeat the powers of darkness and bigotry. The meek inherit the earth and everything is fine in the best of all worlds.

It sounds simple enough. Yet, "The Foreigner" by Larry Shue, the latest offering of the Georgetown Little Theatre at the John Elliott Theatre in the Cultural Centre, 9 Church St., Georgetown, must be one of the most difficult plays the company has ever produced.

The play has a bit of everything. It is funny, it is sad, it is scary and it has a cast of

characters that all go through changes in the course of the action.

The actors not only have to speak the dialect of Georgia (where the story takes place), but have to deal with a "foreign" language the "foreigner" invents on the spot. And last but not least, feats of histrionics are demanded of some of the actors to make the play plausible. The cast, under the direction of Ron Hill, is trying hard but does not always succeed.

Ron Hunt as Foggy le Sueur gives one of his signature interpretations of a rough man with a heart of gold. Eric Witvoet as Charlie Baker manages the sweetness but misses out a bit on the desperation of the man. Barbara Freelen as Betty Meeks is sufficiently rustic. Michael Halsall as the Rev. David Marshall Lee is supposed to be upright and trustworthy at the beginning of the play, to be revealed as an extremely shady character at the end.

As played, however, he is smarmy throughout, a type one would never have wanted to buy a used car from; not to mention a religion. Debra Burden as Catherine Simms is very pretty to look at. Paul D'Entremont as Ellard Simms does well with his difficult part. Marcel Deault as Owen Musser is loud but not menacing enough. The pace of the production could be slower at times.

But don't get the idea that I did not like the production. On the contrary, I enjoyed it a lot. The play offers so many layers and such a host of insightful situations that to have undertaken it deserves high praise. And the set

design by Doug Robinson has a lot of atmosphere and is handsome to look at.

We have just gone through an election campaign where the problems some people seem to have with immigrants and foreigners was

bandied about by politicians and commentators. This play tells you in a whimsical way that the foreigner is the bearer of gifts. To reject them is an act of foolishness.

There will be four more performances of "The Foreigner" by Larry Shue at

the John Elliott Theatre. The dates are Wednesday (tonight), Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Go and have a night out. You will have a good time and you might, without being aware of it, learn something.

Mr. Jones fails to impress

By Dawn Wood and
Lawson Oates

It is often said if you have your health, you have everything.

After watching Mr. Jones, you will undoubtedly add the proviso that if you have your mental health, you have everything.

Mr. Jones is a soul-searching, one-hour-and-50 minute voyage into the life of a manic-depressive. Richard Gere stars as Mr. Jones, a flamboyant drifter who travels in and out of the mental health system.

We are introduced to Mr. Jones when he is in a state of mania. He spends the rest of the movie in depression. In fact, much of the movie is depressing. Many of the scenes involve crying and interviews with disturbed patients.

Although the main action is centered around the events and symptoms of mental health conditions, we are set up at the beginning to observe the love relationship that

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develops between Gere's character and the psychiatrist (Lena Olin). This plot is quite predictable without any surprises to challenge the audience.

The filmmaker attempts to explore more in the area of mental health awareness, but this endeavor must compete with the story of Gere's character and the romance. In an interesting way, the combination of plots adds an interesting perspective to the mental illness challenges.

This movie is not great, but is one of an interesting collection of recent films that have put mental health awareness into the mainstream.

Last summer, Benny and Joon brought the same message to the forefront. Earlier, the message was memorably told in The Fisher King.

Richard Gere performs well in the role of Mr. Jones. He was able to move beyond the typical romantic role

which has become his trademark. He adapts well to deeper, more challenging characters. The acting is generally good, with Anne Bancroft cast in a small role.

The movie itself is a long, drawn out film, written by

Eric Roth and directed by Mike Figgis. This is good news for Gere fans who want maximum time with his face on the screen. Otherwise, the entertainment borders on the depressing side rather than the manic.

GEORGETOWN CINEMAS
235 Guelph Street 873-1999

CINEMA 1 RUDY
NIGHTLY 7 & 9:15 P.M. PG

CINEMA 1 MR. NANNY
SAT. & SUN. 2 P.M. PG

CINEMA 2 COOL RUNNINGS
7 & 9 P.M. NIGHTLY SAT. & SUN. 2 P.M. PG

CINEMA 3 MR. JONES
NIGHTLY 7 & 9:10 P.M. NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN AA

CINEMA 3 HOCUS POCUS
SAT & SUN. 2 P.M. F

Coming Friday...
NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Freddie Wonder Show

Arts Alive is extending an invitation to families with children of all ages to come and see The Freddie Wonder Show on Nov. 7, 2 p.m. at the John Elliott Theatre.

Fred Stinson plays the goofy, nerdy, Freddie Wonder with lots of humor, which totally delights the youngsters. Underneath all this is considerable talent as he juggles atop his unicycle, throwing out one liners which go over the heads of the little ones and land squarely on the adults' funny bone.

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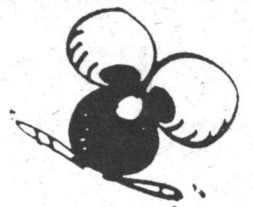
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