

Role play makes play a tense play

By Joel Strauch
Theater Critic

Paul Ableman's contemporary comedy, "Green Julia," explores power, life and relationships.

"Green Julia" is Ableman's first full-length play and is both delightfully simple and artfully complex.

Jacob "Carruthers" Perew (Jeff Luby), a young economist, and Robert "Bradshaw" Lacey (Troy Martin), a young plant physiologist, have been college roommates for five years.

The two are graduating, and Jake is leaving for Hong Kong or some other exotic location. He plans a farewell party and invites his lover, Julia, who never makes it to the gathering.

The play revolves around the relationship between the two roommates and the acting games that they play during their philosophical conversations.

Bob accuses Jake of extending his manipulations of power beyond the fantasy characters that they revert into as they communicate with and entertain each other.

Jake tells Bob that he is too introverted and needs to lift his nose out of his plants and pay attention to life or it will pass him by.

Julia's failure to arrive makes the friends' final evening together particularly tense, and they explore their differing views on life and about each other.

Both of the actors perform well. Their constant character changes are smooth and believable.

Martin's exploration of different vocal inflections adds to the humor of the play, while Luby's sometimes stoic resistance about playing the game and eventual relapse into the roles shows the camaraderie the two have formed.

A delightful romp into the realities of human feelings and emotion, "Green Julia" promises an entertaining performance to be enjoyed by all.

"Green Julia" will play at the Studio Theatre in the Temple Building today and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.

Tickets are \$2 and available at the door.



Jay Calderon/DN

Jonas Cohen performs during a dress rehearsal of "Our Country's Good" Monday night in the Temple Theatre.

Convict theater stuns with sentiment

By Charles Russell
Theater Critic

From the ambiguous apostrophe of its title, to the wonderfully stylized curtain call, the Department of Theater Arts and Dance's Thursday performance of "Our Country's Good" was a celebration of levels.

The play, about the first convict fleet in Sydney, Australia, in 1788-89, uses a variety of theatrical conventions to convey a message of hope.

The story follows a staggering number of convicts and soldiers as they struggle to mount a production of George Farquar's "The Recruiting Officer." Second Lieutenant Ralph Clark (Jonas Cohen), in a rather self-serving move, manages to get himself assigned as director to a ragtag troupe of convict actors.

Clark and the governor-in-chief, Captain Phillip (Patrick Tuttle), hope the play will

establish a sense of humanity and culture in the convicts. They are faced with a challenge in the person of Major Robbie Ross (Jason T. Richards) who opposes the play, claiming it will instill disrespect for the guards.

The stage is thus set for a comic and often touching story extolling the virtues of theater. Thursday's opening night performance got off to a slow start that warmed into an emotional roller coaster by the second act.

As all the actors but Cohen play at least two parts, speak in various dialects and negotiate difficult costume and set changes, there is more than the usual amount of difficulty in putting together a successful production. Unfortunately, the task seemed beyond some of the cast.

Especially early in the play, there was a serious lack of listening going on onstage. Each actor seemed so intent on doing his or her own job that they forgot to pay attention to each other.

Particularly wonderful performances were to be had, however, in Ashley Hassler as Dabby Bryant, Jeremy Kendall as Harry Brewer and John Arscott, and Corky Ford as the aboriginal Australian. All of those actors took daring chances and made bold exciting choices.

Director Robin Mc Kercher created a visually stunning production that fully exploited an astounding multi-leveled set designed by Kara E. Conrad. Mc Kercher seemed to focus a bit too much on the look of his show, however, and rarely delved into the depths of meaning and emotion available in the script.

The real strength of the production was in its second act in which the acting, John Himmelberger's expressive lights and Kimberly K. Traum's imaginative costumes came together to remind us of just how much greatness the theater is capable of.

"Our Country's Good" will run tonight, Saturday and April 18-22 at 8 p.m.



Courtesy of TriStar Pictures

Frustrated jurors try to influence Tommy Collins' (Pauly Shore) decision in "Jury Duty."

Movie barely better than Court TV, O.J.

By Joel Strauch
Film Critic

Imagine the hilarity of a roomful of jurors deliberating the guilt or innocence of a serial killer.

Pretty funny, huh? Now imagine Pauly Shore as one of these jurors.

Sorry, it's not really any funnier. Shore usually stars as a lazy, deadbeat, good-for-nothing slacker in unusual situations.

This time Shore is a lazy, deadbeat, good-for-nothing slacker as a murder-trial juror.

Good thing he's not getting type-cast.

The story starts out with Tommy Collins (Shore) trying and failing to land a job—even as a stripper at his uncle's (Andrew Dice Clay) club.

Collins then turns to jury duty for the five bucks a day and posh

The Facts

Film: "Jury Duty"

Director: John Fortenberry

Stars: Pauly Shore, Tia Carrere

Rating: PG-13

Grade: D

Five Words: Not guilty — of being funny.

accommodations.

Unfortunately, his roommate at the jurors' hotel turns out to be his old high school principal (Richard Riehle).

So Collins pulls some shenanigans and winds up in the presidential suite of the hotel.

To keep his luxurious room, he

See JURY DUTY on 12