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'Misalliance' marks rift between family

BY LIZA HOLTMEIER
Theater Critic

Theater

The grandeur of Victorian propriety and righteousness crumbles amid the laughs and antics of George Bernard Shaw's "Misalliance."

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Theatre Arts and Dance opened its Main Stage season last weekend with a performance of this philosophic comedy.

The play deals with the gulf existing between parents and children, Shaw's ideals of womanhood and the duality of high-class society. It depicts the distress and desire of the wealthy Tarleton family as it copes with over-emotional lovers, rebellious children and even a gunman.

John Snell gives one of the show's strongest performances as John Tarleton Sr., the Tarleton family figurehead. Snell's voice is so melodic and his delivery so naturally rhythmic that he seems to be singing his lines rather than speaking them.

Sasha Statmore's performance as Tarleton's daughter, Hypatia, is another highlight of the show. Her flouncing energy helps keep the audience's attention from straying when Shaw waxes philosophical. Her character prefers smoking and swearing to respectability.

Jeremy Stanbary gives a man's man performance as Johnny, Tarleton's son. With his broad stance and hearty voice, he gives life to a character who feels women should not be independent "for the good of morality."

Dan Rasmussen plays Bentley, Tarleton's hypersensitive business partner who becomes the object of Hypatia's desire. Mostly he is a man who is "all brains and no more body than is absolutely necessary."

Rasmussen's fastidious, pouting portrayal (his lower lip protrudes most of the second act) tires the audience almost as quickly as it tires the characters in the play. When Rasmussen's tantrum-throwing character is dragged off stage toward the

end of Act Two, the audience bursts into applause.

Eric Harrell deviates from his usual ingenue roles to play Bentley's father — the elderly, yet indefatigable, Lord Summerhays. Harrell commands the stage from the moment he enters and proves that an actor doesn't need sweeping gestures and grand stage movements.

Kendra Holmquist's portrayal as Lina Szczepanowska — the Polish acrobat who crashes in an airplane onto the Tarleton's property — serves as the foil to Hypatia. Unlike Hypatia, Lina does not wait for adventure to fall out of the sky; she creates adventure for herself. In Shaw's view, she is "all that a woman ought to be."

Holmquist's strong stance, voice and premeditated gestures directly contrast Statmore's character. Though her accent sounds muddled during her first few moments on stage, it increases in strength as the play progresses.

Finally, Michael Semrad represents the plight and values of the lower class as the gunman Julius Baker. He reprimands the Tarletons and the Summerhays for the so-called "morals of the pious capitalist class."

Tice Miller directs the show with such subtlety that the audience doesn't realize it has been preached at for three hours until members have left the theater.

Dawn Schaefer's exquisite set underscores the play's messages. With its vaulted ceilings, high arches, flowered wallpaper and wicker furniture, it represents Victorian elegance and propriety. It serves as an ever-present contrast to the impropriety of the play's characters.

"Misalliance" runs today through Saturday at 8 p.m. in the Temple Building's Howell Theatre. Tickets are \$6 for students, \$9 for senior citizens, UNL faculty and staff and \$10 for others. Call 472-2073.

BUSTA from page 9

"Put Your Hands Where My Eyes Could See," he gives a shout out to such notables as De La Soul's Dove and the late Notorious B.I.G.

This frame of mind can prove hazardous as well. While "The Coming" track "Ill Vibe" features Q-Tip from A Tribe Called Quest on vocals, the new track, "The Body Rock," features Sean "Puffy" Combs and Mase, and it is probably the worst Busta Rhymes song ever.

The album isn't held down by the song, though. The opener, "The Whole World Lookin' At Me," is classic Busta, with steady vocals and a sing-along chorus. "Dangerous" is lyrically the best song on the record, with the rhymes frequent and hard hitting, and Busta breaks it down on "One" with the help of Erykah Badu.

Rampage's "Scouts Honor" is similar to "When Disaster Strikes," but is more fun. Busta helped produce the debut record that busts Rampage onto the scene.

On the first track, Rampage proclaims "Flipmode Iz Da Squad," referring to the empire headed by Busta, and throughout the album Rampage displays Flipmode artists such as Serious, Spliff Star, Lord Have Mercy, and on three songs, Busta Rhymes.

Rampage's voice is a mixture of his cousin and KRS-One's, and he is known as the "Lyrical Lieutenant" of the Flipmode Squad. Throughout the album, Rampage makes good on the title with crisp rhymes and a very tight sound.

He comes after the listener song after song, from the hook-centered "Wild For Da Night" to the party-jam "Take It To The Streets" to the Public Enemy-influenced "Flipmode Enemy #1."

Woo-hah.

-Patrick Miner

LIFE IN HELL

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