



'Charlie Brown' thoroughly enjoyable

If you've ever chuckled at a "Peanuts" cartoon, chances are you'll thoroughly enjoy "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown."

And if you're an avid reader of the comic strip, then you'll have a wonderful time meeting some of your favorite people tomorrow night as the play continues its run Sept. 24 and 25 and Oct. 1 and 2.

The play, which was the concluding production of this summer's Carnival Theater, is being performed each of those nights on the University Theater main stage beginning at 8:30 p.m.

And it is simply one of the most enjoyable, humorous and fun plays viewed in this area for a long time.

Review

By ART BUSHNELL

Although the actors don't really look like the characters they portray — they aren't even the right ages — by the end of the performance, they'll have you believing they are the characters that appear in the comic strip.

Part of the reason for this might be that the play is a combination of Charles Schulz's daily comic strips and musical sketches based on the cartoons. But, even more than this is the attitude of the actors. They capture completely the essence and spirit of the cartoon characters.

Jim Dodge as Charlie Brown is perfectly wishy-washy; Bradley Trowbridge captures Linus' wisdom — but also his affection for his blanket; Jennifer Ann Pack as Lucy is very believable as she makes life miserable for everyone else; Schroeder is equally well done by Randy Bowser, who shows just the right amount of affection for his piano and his Beethoven bust; Lydia Lord is equally adept at capturing the spirit of the play — but she's not the boyish Peppermint Patti. Lydia plays a frilly, young girl — and does it well — but she's just not Patti. It's not her fault, but rather an error on the part of Clark Cesner's adaptation.

The music is also equally well done. It captures just the right mood, but never distracts attention from the action on stage.

In the end, though, the play really belongs to Snoopy.

Craig Wasson, wearing a white sweater and black pants, becomes the imaginative dog before your eyes. From the play's beginning, when his barks are subtly mixed with the cast's first musical number, the play is his.

The real show-stopper is Wasson's performance of "Supper Time!" — a musical number performed by Snoopy as Charlie Brown brings him his supper dish. Wasson's lively cavorting and romping around stage, as the dog hams it up for dinner, are excellent.

Other very memorable scenes include "Snoopy," in which Wasson performs his first solo number of the night and begins to capture the crowd; "The Book Report," a delightful piece in which Lucy, Linus, Schroeder and Charlie Brown compose book reports simultaneously — with each one's report reflecting the character — and again the spirit — of the comic strip people perfectly; "The Baseball Game," in which the cast, led by Charlie Brown, ekes out another defeat; and "Little Known Facts," a romp with Lucy as she leads her little brother around the neighborhood and lets him in on some of the little known facts about life (fir trees are called fir trees because they give us fur).

All in all, Jim Chapman has directed a real winner with this play. It more than deserved the standing ovation it got the night I saw the production. It is must-seeing for anyone that's ever read "Peanuts."

