

Company gives good performances

By Barbara Coleman

"Company," a zestful musical-comedy concerning marriage, its trials and tribulations, opened Friday at the Carnival Theatre. Though seemingly lacking a little in story line and character development, the play was highly entertaining and offered many excellent and delightful individual performances.

The characters consist of Robert (or Bobby), three girlfriends, and five married couples who are Bobby's friends and "company." Perhaps the problem with character development is that there are too many characters present to allow time to develop individual characters fully. Although the play is highly entertaining and amusing, something seems missing. The something perhaps is a clearer idea of what the characters were telling the audience about themselves. Even so, there are several excellent individual efforts.

Good performance

Joseph Zingo, in the lead role of Bobby, was one of good performances. Bobby is a 31 year old bachelor with a group of married friends who constantly invite him to their house for "company." Zingo comes off very well as the slightly confused innocent who can't quite figure out from his friend's erratic marriages whether marriage is a good or a bad thing. His little boy's speaking voice contributes to the portrayal of a character who at 31 is still searching for perfection in marriage. Zingo sings pleasingly and shows that he is a talented dancer as well.

Review

Unfortunately, the male performances, with the exception of Zingo, are not outstanding enough to compete with several strong performances by the actresses. The men do not seem to develop their characters to the extent of the roles of Marta, Joanne or Amy.

Sandy Puckett in the role of Marta, one of Bobby's girlfriends, does an excellent job as a crazy kook who thinks she is the pulse of New York and that 14th street is the center of the universe. She sings "Another Hundred People Just Got Off of the Train" with the fascination of someone totally in love with New York City and totally in love with herself. She has a very good voice and seems to be completely into her character.

Joanne, played by Chilton Peterson, gave another excellent performance. Joanne is thrice married, cynical, and loves making sarcastic cuts and jabs at any available victim. Peterson uses well that expressionless grin of actresses, and a superior attitude in playing the role of Joanne, who in the end shows herself to be as unhappy in her role as she shows others to be in theirs.

Finally, Katie Axtell brings a confused gentleness to the role of Amy, who can't decide to marry the man she has been living with for so long that a wedding ceremony is an embarrassment. Amy keeps insisting that she's not getting married. Her panic in facing a marriage is aptly portrayed by Axtell, whose wide-eyed expressions show her feelings clearly.

"Company" presents the question of marriage, whether it is worthwhile or a waste of freedom, and uses its central character, Bobby, as the means to an answer. Bobby visits his friends in the process of discovering what marriage is about, and several memorable scenes emerge from the play.

Karate

One such scene occurs when Bobby visits the home of a couple who challenge each other to a Karate match. The result looks like a duel to the death until Bobby acts as referee.

Another scene that comes off well is the morning of the wedding of Amy and Paul. Amy keeps insisting she won't get married, while the chorus sings its own version of a wedding march. Bobby contributes to the scene by proposing to the unwilling bride, and in the process of explaining that you have to want to marry "someone, not just someone" (anyone), Amy decides to marry Paul.

"Company" is also worth your while. It's an entertaining play that takes an interesting look at marriage and will keep you amused.



Photo by Nick Lacy

Joanne (Chilton Peterson) laughs at Susan's (Judy Sullivan) expense during a birthday party for Bobby.



Photo by Nick Lacy

Bobby (Joe Zingo) and the cast sing the finale.

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