



Lauren Wimer Photographer

Sophomore Stacy Douglas plays Claire and senior Daren Lundeen plays Limping Man in "Fuddy Meers," a University Theatre comedy that runs through May 1. The production features odd and eccentric characters who interact in dysfunctional ways.

'Fuddy Meers' uses comedy to tackle dramas of family

University Theatre's latest production is off in timing but has an interesting plot

By Ryan Murphey
Freelance Reporter

It's hard to imagine a comedy centered around dead siblings, stroke victims and spousal abuse, but that's exactly what University Theatre's latest production, "Fuddy Meers," features.

The play, written by David Lindsay-Abaire, looks at the lighter side of the dysfunctional family. The story pokes fun at domestic violence and manages to find the humor in teenage drug abuse, wrongful imprisonment and psychological disorders.

The plot centers around Claire — played by sophomore Stacy Douglas — a wife and mother who has been diagnosed with psychogenic amnesia, an affliction that erases her memory every time she falls asleep. Claire's husband, Richard, who is played by junior Sean Andries, takes on the daily task of explaining Claire's situation to her, even providing her with a book of information pertinent to her day.

Shortly after Claire's daily reintroduction to her son Kenny, who is played by freshman Stevo Clay, she is kidnapped by a limping and hideously deformed convict who claims to be her brother. The man tells Claire she is in grave danger from her husband Richard, and the pair rush off to Claire's mother's house. Claire's mother, Gertie, has been rendered more-or-less incomprehensible by a stroke, but despite her inability to communicate verbally, it is clear she is upset by the arrival of the limping man.

As the day unfolds, more odd characters are introduced, and more of Claire's past is revealed. But despite the many twists in the script, other elements in the show cause the whole thing to fall a little flat.

The acting in "Fuddy Meers" is repetitive. From the first five minutes to the last, Claire is the same ditzy Shirley Temple-like character. Likewise, the other characters offer little in the way of emotional range. Gertie is irritated, Kenny is a secretly sensitive child wrapped up in unmitigated angst and Richard is like a reformed alcoholic turned camp counselor. These one-dimensional personalities become obnoxious long before intermission, so by the end of the production they become

downright exhausting.

Another stumbling block is the play's timing. Timing is important in a comedy, and in "Fuddy Meers" the timing is notably awkward. Pauses that are a little too long feel like the actors who don't know their lines, and characters' delayed reactions to one another make for unconvincing relationships.

Perhaps the most distracting element of the play is the stack of pancakes that sporadically appears on top of Gertie's head. Unless the intention behind this prop was to confuse the audience to the point of insomnia, it failed.

Overall, "Fuddy Meers" is not a terrible play, but it is far from a must-see.

"Fuddy Meers" will play tonight, Friday, Saturday and April 29, 30 and May 1. All shows begin at 8 p.m. in the Arena Theatre, room 104 of Villard Hall. Tickets for this show are \$6 for the general public, \$5 for senior citizens, University faculty, staff and non-University students and \$4 for University students. Tickets are available on campus at the EMU Ticket Office. On evenings of the performances, tickets also can be purchased at the University Theater Box Office in the Robinson Theatre.

Ryan Murphey is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

Nelson provides tax answers

I'm not entirely sure, but I think I might be a criminal. If I am, the crime is not severe in my mind. It is nothing like what other beasts have done in our history. I have not killed anyone, set fire to anything, molested a child or mugged a broke old woman. But in the eyes of the government, I may just be an outlaw.

You see, at the time of this writing, my taxes have not been filed. At the time of this publication, my taxes will remain unfiled. Most likely, one year from now, my taxes for this year will not be filed.

It's not a protest or anything. However, consider what the current administration is doing:



Carl Sundberg

Reasoning with madness

1) Giving corporations huge tax breaks while the average break for the rest of us is worth a six-pack and a hot dog.

2) Stirring up the hive in Iraq in the name of some misguided attempt at

"liberation."

3) Any of the other horrid things that are being exposed now by people like Richard Clarke, Ron Suskind, Bob Woodward or Paul O'Neill.

Given all the aforementioned, I could easily say I do not support this kind of behavior. I could easily say I will not pay my taxes until those crooks in the White House are either ousted or slowroasted over the media coals for the rest of their slimy careers. I could say that.

I could also say that I didn't file my taxes out of confusion. Those tax forms are like coded Sanskrit to me, and I have no idea what I should be

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EMU Ballroom - 2nd Floor

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