

"Almost Maine" shows maturity of WLHS theater program

CHARLIE CRAFT

In the second scene of the WLHS theatre's production of "Almost Maine" Reed Sturtevant, junior, describes the small town of Almost: "We never got around to getting organized, we're just Almost." This is what I felt at the beginning of intermission; this was almost a cohesive,

"Our Town" tells meaningful story

CHARLIE CRAFT

A black clad figure walks across a fully lit stage with the house lights still on, then another with a broom and then another with a clipboard. I was beginning to wonder why they hadn't set up the stage beforehand and when the play would begin. Then I realized; it already had.

I attended the junior showing of "Our Town," written by Thornton Wilder,

believable play. With impressive performances by Louie Hogan and Anna Stapleton, seniors, the first act was entertaining, but it felt like a track was on repeat. The second act changed my perspective.

Written by John Cariani, of "Law & Order" fame, "Almost Maine" is a play

But the patrons gradually became restless, some still not understanding that the play had begun. Eventually the director, Annie Kaiser, preforming arts building coordinator, had to come out onto the stage and explain that the play had indeed begun.

Louie Hogan, senior, has an integral part in "Our Town", as the Stage Manager who acts as the narrator, the director, and plays a role in the play

in nine scenes. With each scene, the show gains momentum and begins to bind together as a portrait of the intimate, romantic and hilarious moments of a small town in America. The first scene begins with a prologue with a theme of hopes of love gained and then lost. Injected with comedy,

of Grover's Corners. The optimism of the first act is supported by big performances from Anna Stapleton and Sophie Starks-Madsen, seniors who are the two mothers in the play. Life is simple and happy in Grover's Corners, Hogan, the narrator describes it, "This is the way we were in our growing up and our marrying, and our living, and our dying."

The narration is one step ahead of the play. The second act opens three years later and has a more pessimistic feel—a fear of entering the world and leaving childhood behind. At this point there is a wedding. It was during this innocent event that I realized how restrained the first two acts have been, we don't even see the bride and groom kiss. This restraint contributes to the feeling that we are in rural New England in the early 20th century. It helps us understand the deeper feelings of the characters.

The final act of the play takes place nine years after the second act and it is a departure from the previous two acts in different ways. Many of the characters have died and we follow one soul recently laid to rest. We see the death from the deceased points of view. It clearly illustrates Wilder's feelings about death and what the dead mean to the living. Melissa Cozzi, sophomore, is the star of the third act. She captures the melancholy and sense of loss that permeates the act.

Overall "Our Town" is a dark and even depressing show, and its many themes revolving around life and death are as affecting as an immersive novel.

the formula continues and basically remains the same throughout the first act of the play. This is not to say I did not enjoy the first part of the play, it's just that because I was being slapped in the face with the same basic theme over and over again, I began to deprecate the wonderful performance.

I sat down at the end of intermission, wearily, expecting the same treatment I had received in the first act of the play. The second act, however, was a revelation. It changed up the formula, injecting different ideas about romanticism and providing a darker side to all the hilarity and heart-touching moments of the first act.

The opening scene of the second act is the first scene to

involve two male characters played by Michael Johnson and Spencer Cook, seniors. It continued throughout the rest of the play with more melancholy resolutions than the rest of the show.

The change in the end of the play caused me to reflect upon the first act and see it in a better light, to see the entire play as a story arch with unresolved beginning changing to a satisfying ending. The themes of love and comedy in the first act begin to seem more wishful and desperate through the filter of the second act. Yet, the end of play reveals hope, hope that we can get past the hang-ups and social pressures that chain us and it shows that love can exist in even the coldest weather.

"Romeo and Juliet" turned into gnomes; strays from original

ALEX SISCA

One of the most famous love stories of all time has a new twist: animated gnomes. Romeo and Juliet become gnomes along with the rest of Shakespeare's characters in the new Disney film, "Gnomeo and Juliet." And this time, the star-crossed lovers might actually have a chance to live.

Gnomeo (voiced by James McAvoy) and Juliet (voiced by Emily Blunt) are gnomes that come to life when their owners aren't looking. Just like in the original "Romeo and Juliet," Gnomeo and Juliet fall in love even though their families are rivals. The two families are the blue-hatted gnomes (Montagues) and the red-hatted gnomes (Capulets).

In 84 minutes, the movie only skimmed the surface of the original play. Quite a lot was changed: Gnomeo and Juliet didn't meet at a party like in the original play. Instead, they meet when Juliet is trying to pick a flower that she thought would make the Montagues jealous of the Capulets. The movie is set in modern times and no Shakespearean language is used.

I felt not having the Shakespearean language really ruined the effect of the story for me. It adds mystery and understanding. Some of the characters from the original play have been taken out and some had their names changed. For instance, Mercutio and Benvolio are combined into

one character as Romeo's best friend in the form of Benny, a small, short overly-hyper and annoying gnome. Another character changed was Nurse, who becomes a garden frog.

I felt that the changes did not respect the original play because "Romeo and Juliet" is a tragedy and it shouldn't have been changed into a happy Disney movie. I'm not saying that the movie was bad, but I just wish it wasn't as happy and joyful as Disney usually



Courtesy of Touchstone Pictures **Gnomeo and Juliet** meet for the first time in the movie of the same name. The film version adds a twist to the original story, because the main characters are gnomes. While the movie barely skimmed the surface of Shakespeare's play, it is still a great Disney movie for kids.

makes all its movies.

"Gnomeo and Juliet" was enjoyable, but I felt it could have kept closer to the original play more.

I would rate the movie a ★★☆☆ because I was really hoping for it to cover a lot more of the original story. It is more of a mellow version for kids. This movie is rated G for all ages. If you enjoy a kid movie every once in a while then this might be a good movie for you to see.



Photo courtesy of Caitlin Tompkins
Anna Stapleton and Sophie Starks-Madsen, seniors, discuss their lives while stringing beans on the front porch during the production of "Our Town." The duo played two strong mothers from the town of Grover's Corner, N.H.

and although I was glad to be excused from class, I realized it might be difficult to hear the play with that particular audience. I was pleasantly surprised from the get-go. The rest of the audience seemed to be as intrigued by the minimalist beginning of the play as I had been.

itself. This brings me to the most unique and fascinating aspect of "Our Town." It is not just a story about life in a small American town, it is actually a play within a play.

The play begins in 1901 and revolves around two families and their lives in the small New Hampshire town

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