

The Arts

LeRoy Anderson hosts jazz class

"Friends of the Library" are sponsoring a free jazz program featuring Clackamas Community College music. Chairperson LeRoy Anderson who will speak on "A History of American Jazz."

The jazz program will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge.

Anderson will give a discussion about what jazz is and the history behind it. "I'm going to introduce everyone to the Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz," Anderson said.

The Smithsonian Institution recordings are six albums which "Are the best history of jazz that I've ever come across," he said.

Along with the records, there is a book describing various artists. The albums feature authentic early artists performing jazz. "Some of the recordings are pretty scratched, but people will have a good opportunity to hear what the music and artists of the early jazz era sounded like," Anderson said.

"I think by telling people about these Smithsonian Institution recordings, they could spend many hours listening to the albums and reading along. It's really an education. That's really the best way to understand and appreciate jazz," he said.

A variety of artists are featured on the albums, including Scott Johnson, Bessie Smith, Count Basie and Benny Carter.

"A lot of the musicians featured on these albums are jazz stylists who influenced people who came along later," Anderson said.

The albums also delve lightly into free form jazz. "I'm going to try to spark an interest in jazz to people who come and show them where they can find these recordings and where to go to learn more about jazz," he said.

Along with Anderson, Jim Edgington will be at the piano with improvisations and the music of Scott Joplin and George Gershwin.

Review So-so acting in 'Hollow' does injustice to Agatha Christie

By DeAnn Dietrich
Of The Print

Agatha Christie's drama is excellent in novel form but is extremely difficult to translate to the screen and even harder for the stage, as is evident in Clackamas Community College's production of Christie's "The Hollow."

In this whodunit, the audience must give generous allowances to the imagination when it comes to considering this as true drama and in fact is easier seen as having comic qualities. Adding to the forced mysterious ambience is a feeling that no one had reached a complete decision to play their role seriously, leaving the play with an almost farcical feel to it.

Set at the house of Sir Henry and Lady Lucy Angkatell outside London, the plot begins with a gathering of guests for the weekend. As each character is introduced, several conflicts begin to surface. After allowing enough time for the audience to pick up on who the most-likely-to-be-murdered award goes to, Christie decides to let someone pull the trigger. By this point, everyone in the house and even a neighbor have motives for performing this brutal murder. Unfortunately, by the end of the third hour when the murderer is finally revealed the interest of the audience is waning.

There is a saving point to this production and that is the electric moments of comedy between a few precious characters. Unfortunately, again, they were few and far between. Two of the most delightful personalities seen on stage are those of Sir Henry and dippy Lady Lucy. Giving a commendable performance, Maggie Bragg portrayed the eccentric Lady Lucy with a strong character build-up so that by the end of the play, she had an adoring audience. Her exits and entrances kept an upbeat pace to an often dragging plot.

Almost as lovable is her husband, Sir Henry, played by seasoned actor David Harvey. With extensive make-up, Harvey is able to portray a fairly believable and stable character. Sir Henry and Lady Lucy provide a delightful spice to the otherwise drab spectrum of relationships on stage. Their colorfulness and comfortable stage presence lead intrigue as to what their involvement in a murder could be.

Also living at the Angkatell's house is Henrietta Angkatell, a prime target for speculation. The performance of Jeanine Kryza as Henrietta passed up ample opportunities to develop a flamboyant and intriguing character and all that the audience got to see was an intricate character stifled by monotonous lines. Although the lines were read with flawless memory, they were read nonetheless.

Carrying the role of Dr. John Cristow, Joel Hladecek relies on a steady and over-used scowl which oversimplifies what appears to be a multi-faceted character. When he and Henrietta get together on stage, the result is a complete lack of energy with every line demanding a tension that is never created.

A shining role in this production is that of Cristow's wife, Gerda, played by Lynn Meyers.

In a role that gives every chance to over-act, Meyers creates an excellent balance in her subtleness of delivery. Meyers creates an excellent balance in her subtleness of delivery. Myer's moments of hysteria surpass any tension that is created through the play. Deserving recognition for a professional job, Myers gives "The Hollow" a deeply needed touch of realism.

Edward Angkatell and Midge Harvey, played by Patrick Sterling and Vonnie Davis are two guests with few interesting qualities. Not entirely the fault of the actors though, the scripts don't give them much to work with.

The neighbor-in-suspect is Veronica Craye (Cindy Brown), a film star engaged in a love-hate relationship with John Cristow. Over-acting is an easy tendency in such a role and Brown had moments of melodrama in this performance. But she managed to keep a sincere attitude.

Doris the maid, played by Linda Kuntz, and Gudgeon, the butler, played by Neil Hass, offer some very humorous touches in their brief appearances. Gudgeon gets laughs without even saying anything (need I say more?).

Arriving to save the day are Inspector Colquhoun (J. Dana Haynes) and his lively sidekick Sgt. Penny (Chris Parrish). Both actors have wonderful control of their accents and look great in their suits but Haynes was too aloof to get enough of his character across.

The set design is very well crafted and sturdy, meaning the walls don't shake at every entrance and exit. It appears authentic and complete with suitable props. Obviously research and time went into the design of the set.

Also to be praised is the make-up and costuming for the play. John Cristow and Sir Henry are especially well made-up. Harvey did his own make-up for his face and his hands, using latex for a very realistic aging.

Costuming was covered by Lynn Meyers who did an extremely fine job attaining top quality outfits. She considered the character's personality for each costume, creating a consistently-accenting and apropos wardrobe.

This particular performance (Friday's) contained a few major form errors which gave the audience reason to laugh during what would be considered serious moments, such as a death scene. Christie fans wouldn't be amused, but it may have been better to spotlight the comic side rather than stumble upon it.

For Agatha Christie fans, I would recommend the production for its good moments, since most people would realize the difficulty in doing justice to Christie on the stage. For those who are not familiar with either Christie, or this particular play, I say stay home and read the book. Then, maybe, see the play.

"The Hollow" will play Friday and Saturday this week at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.



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