

'36 Views' bigger than Mt. Fuji

Cory Price
CO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Portland Center Stage's smashingly brilliant production of "36 Views" opened last weekend to a full house and the audience was not let down; this drama is a perfect addition to the 2004 line-up of plays in Portland.

The play is a very modern production, leaving the norm behind and adventuring into a new world of stage performance. Most of the time, costume changes occurred right on stage, causing a sense of chaos, and yet the action flowed smoothly.

When the actors were not performing, they sat just off stage, but still in view of the audience. This was a wonderful change to the monotonous stereotype of how a play should be.

The show opened with a line from lead actor Darius Miles standing center-stage, speaking directly to the audience as he announces "This is a true story." From beginning to end, "36 Views" enthralled the audience members, taking them on a psychological trip through the Japanese art-dealing world.

The greatest thing about the play was the subplot exploring the concept of how people can be contradictory at times to their own

beliefs and how even the employees can become the employers.

For example, during a scene in act two, Claire Tsong, an independent art restorer, stands center stage speaking to John Bell, assistant to Miles, about the discovery of a rare pillow book. While talking, Tsong changes out of her t-shirt and jeans into a formal dress. At first I viewed this as a random act, but then I realized the symbolism. The wardrobe change represented Tsong's transition from an average worker to a person of dignity and power.

The closing scene was the best representative of the modernism of this production, changing the rules of how plays are done.

The backdrop rose, exposing backstage. Enter two actors, but they are out of character. They are reviewing the play as if they were spectators out in the lobby. The statements they make, however, make one question their legitimacy. Torn between fantasy and reality, the audience can only sit and watch their conversation unfold. This brought to an end a play that was magnificently directed and acted.

The title itself causes a person to wonder and question everything that is going to happen during the play. The playwright Naomi Iizuka named the production "36 Views" based on paintings of the same

name by 19th century Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai.

In a famous series called "Thirty-Six Views of Fuji," Hokusai painted three dozen images of Mount Fuji from as many viewpoints. Similarly, the playwright describes every possible angle of what humans are like and how life is not a one-dimensional screen print.

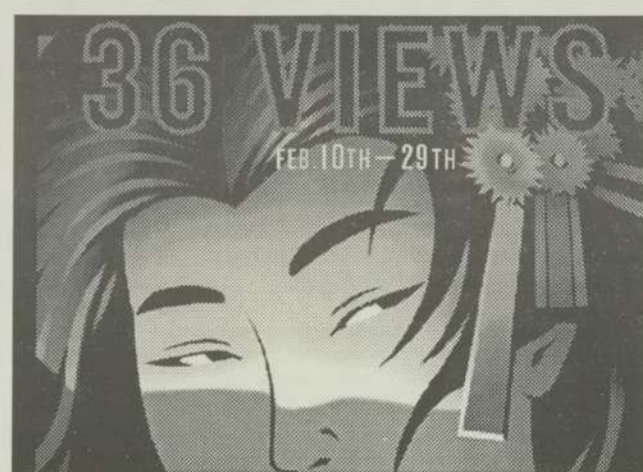
"What we thought was the truth changes. Our perceptions shift. And it's complicated. People are complicated," said Iizuka about her reason for writing "36 Views."

In just under two hours running time, the pace of the production never slows down, thus keeping the audience engaged. Portland's Newmark Theater is perfect for such a production. It is an intimate venue that allows all patrons to be no more than 60 feet from the stage, making audience members feel like they're in the middle of the action. The set is simple, causing imaginations to work a little harder.

Curtain rises at 7 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday nights and Sunday at 2 and 7 p.m. through Feb. 29, so be sure to catch this wonderful play that sends the audience face-first into the world of Japanese art.

For tickets, call the box office at (503) 274-6588. Depending on the day and seat location, pricing

varies from \$23.50 to \$51, but for those under 25 the cost is only \$16 any day of the week.

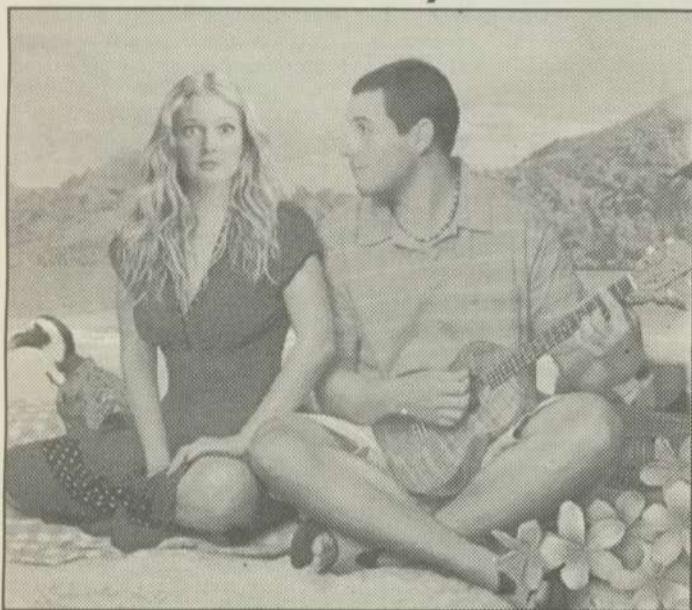


The English department is proud to sponsor a dramatic presentation by Mead Hunter, Literary Manager for Portland Center Stage, Melody Butiu (who plays Claire Tsong) & Gregory Patrick Jackson (who plays John Bell).

Tuesday, Feb. 24 @ noon
in the McLoughlin Theatre

(For more information, contact Amanda Coffey at (503) 657-6958, ext 2829)

Sandler stays true-to-form in latest masterpiece



INTERNET PHOTO

Drew Barrymore and Adam Sandler's latest movie is far from a remake as the two friends co-star in '50 First Dates.'

Jeff Sorensen
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

True to Hallmark holiday form, Valentine's Day marked the flagship weekend for Adam Sandler's appropriately brilliant new film "50 First Dates."

Sandler and his good friend Drew Barrymore pair up once again for a movie about a doctor at a marine life park in Hawaii. Sandler has a pretty serious commitment problem and enjoys the pastime of taking advantage of women visiting the island from the mainland, but things turn around for him when he falls for a girl he meets in a diner (Barrymore).

This girl is a little out of the ordinary, however. She has been in a car accident and diagnosed with short-term memory loss. Every night as she sleeps, her memory resets to the day of the accident (conveniently also her father's birthday) and she wakes

up every morning to the same routine, thinking it is Sunday morning.

Sandler shows some serious restraint this time around, waiting a full five minutes before diving right into the bathroom humor that only Adam Sandler can deliver. He really revives the old coaching adage of not showing off and sticking to what you know.

While Sandler holds to his own brand of humor, his usual friends follow suit. Rob Schneider manages to stay away from his "You can do it" line, but instead introduces a delightfully crude new character with a passion for swimming with sharks. Even Dan Akroyd (who plays Barrymore's doctor) gets in on the fun with references to "Big Tom Callahan," his auto parts competitor from the movie "Tommy Boy."

The big star of the movie, surprisingly, is Barrymore herself. Most scenes take place on a new day, where Barrymore's character,

Lucy, must realize the truth of her life and her condition over and over again.

Dealing with this truth for the first time, however, would prove difficult for anyone to swallow, and Lucy is no exception.

Barrymore portrays Lucy's emotional progress from anger to denial and all the way to acceptance in scene after scene with all the professionalism of a truly "A-List" actor. Barrymore delivers a surprisingly stellar leap from her days with "E.T." and even a big step beyond her work as recent as "Charlie's Angels."

When "50 First Dates" gets released to DVD, make sure to save a spot for it in the Sandler collection. Everyone in Hollywood has their "Bulletproof" and their "Punch Drunk Love," but Sandler's latest is 100% raw Adam and definitely worth the time and money. Be sure to have a nice shower waiting, just in case.



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Zen Corner

A rich man asked Sengai to write something for the continued prosperity of his family so that it might be treasured from generation to generation.

Sengai obtained a large sheet of paper and wrote:
"Father dies, son dies, grandson dies."

The rich man became angry. "I asked you to write something for the happiness of my family! Why do you make such a joke of this?"

"No joke is intended," explained Sengai. "If before you yourself die, your son should die, this would grieve you greatly. If your grandson should pass away before your son, both of you would be broken-hearted. If your family, generation after generation, passes away in the order I have named, it will be the natural course of life. I call this real prosperity."