

Loneliness Overcome at the 'Bus Stop'

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Arts & Culture Editor

On one treacherously blustery night, a long hiatus of the town is caused by blocked roads.

The outcome is a relieving of lonesomeness of the heart and a couple other cases.

Such is the central theme of Clackamas' current theatre production "Bus Stop," the myriad of differing desires, including infatuation and, I dare say, even love.

Owned by a jaded 40-something woman named Grace who is almost never at a loss for words or sexual appetite – she normally serves as a 20-minute pit stop for the bus from Clackamas City. It's a place of employment for naïve, yet quick-witted, local girl Elma Duckworth.

It also is the sole backdrop for the play.

"Bus Stop" specifically focuses on the few hours of the night spent at Grace's Diner by the bus riders, plus the driver and town sheriff.

The sheriff, Will Masters, is a staunch man with a deep sense of morality, and has never been licked in a fight, except



Photos by John Shufelt, Clackamas Print

TOP: Elma, a young waitress at Grace's Diner, listens in rapturous intent to bus passenger Cherie talk about sex, her job as a nightclub singer and cowboy Bo Decker.

BOTTOM LEFT: Grace, the owner of the diner, pours a mug of hot coffee for Sheriff Will Masters as they wait for the bus to arrive.



for once.

Will waits for the bus to arrive with the diner women so that he can inform the driver that night, Carl, that he can go no further until the weather and roads clear up.

The first passenger to enter is a 19-year-old, glitzy-dressed nightclub singer from Kansas City who calls herself Cherie.

Immediately following the bus' screeching halt outside, Cherie rushes in with a battered suitcase to seek refuge and asks Will for his protection.

The object of her fear is wealthy cowboy Bo Decker, who she claims abducted her to bring to his Montana ranch as a wife.

Bo and his father figure, Virgil Blessing, are asleep on the bus, and Cherie uses the opportunity to attempt an escape.

The only other passenger, grey-haired Dr. Gerald Lyman, soon follows. He fixates with pedophilic delight on Elma behind the counter and situates himself close by in order to engage her in conversation.

Carl enters and, after passing on a couple suspicious comments about his passengers to Will and arousing the cowboys, excuses himself to go for a "walk."

A couple of minutes later, suddenly stricken with a "head-ache," Grace retires to her upstairs apartment.

Neither of the two are seen again for quite awhile, which leaves the diner's operations in the capable hands of young Elma.

With Will prompting her and keeping a watchful eye,

Cherie soon communicates to Bo that she doesn't want to go with him.

Hiding under a mask of brutish manners and seemingly cocky exterior, Bo refuses to take no for an answer.

Throughout the rest of the three-act play, Bo is gently advised by the calm Virgil to be "tender" to Cherie rather than maul her, and Will is ever-ready to stand in between the cowboy and "his woman" when Bo's temper flares.

In the meantime, Dr. Lyman spouts sonnets from Shakespeare and regales Elma with tales of his three ex-wives and past as a professor, staring lecherously all the while and producing a flask to fuel his penchant for alcohol.

Blending dirty humor, underlying tones of realism and the small-town mentality into an intriguing cocktail, William Inge's "Bus Stop" can easily be understood by the

modern college audience.

Clackamas' rendition is well worth the price of a ticket because of the commendable acting by members of the college's student body – both veterans and newcomers alike.

Showings of "Bus Stop" start at 7:30 p.m. May 29, 30 and 31, with the final show Sunday, June 1, at 2:30 p.m.

Ticket cost is \$12 for general admission and staff, and \$10 for seniors or students with a college ID card.

For further information, contact Theatre Department Secretary Jennifer Schwartzman at ext. 2356 or by e-mail at jens@clackamas.edu.

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Battle of the Bands

Two bands competed in the Battle of the Bands at Clackamas on Wednesday, May 21.

VS.



Kyle Jones
Lead Singer

Influences:
Bob Dylan,
Paul Revere
and the
Raiders

Ensign
Easychord

Robert Crawford
Clackamas Print

- Compiled by
Robert Crawford



Craig Crockett
Doghouse Bass/
Singer

Influences:
The Jay Cats
and Cherry
Poppin'
Maddies

1st

The
Dicers

Contributed by
The Dicers