

Play displays uncomfortable power

Matt Ostergren

The Clackamas Print

Clackamas' own theater department has a new show on display. It's called "How I Learned to Drive," and while it is a well-performed piece, it is probably not for everyone. The mature themes, which include pedophilia, incest and difficult subject matter that are the focus of the play, simultaneously cause it to be so compelling, and also completely inappropriate for young children.

Last Friday I saw "How I Learned to Drive," at Clackamas' Osterman Theatre in the Niemeyer Center. The set was very modular, and felt very appropriate to the frequently changing place and time of the various scenes. Many of the props consisted of white rectangular shaped boxes, and small raised platforms. Old videos related to brands of cars or driving instruction were shown between several of the scenes, to help set the mood and allow the audience time to transition between the disjointed timeline. The events of the play did not take place in chronological order.

The actors themselves were dressed to fit the times from which the scenes were selected. Most scenes occurred during the 1960's, with the exception of a few scenes involving Li'l Bit, the protagonist, as an older adult. As the title implies, much of the play has a secondary

focus on driving.

The two constant characters in the show are Li'l Bit and her uncle Peck. Li'l Bit spends most of the time oscillating between 13 and 18 throughout, while Peck remains a much more constant in character because of his continued seniority over Li'l Bit. Describing Peck is not easy. According to Brian Haliski, the actor who plays Peck, taking on his role was very difficult. Peck manipulates and molests his niece several times, and thus is not a likable character. In the story, Peck is a veteran who is obviously scarred from his experiences in World War II. He is an active alcoholic until Li'l Bit persuades him to cease drinking. He is the kind of character that evokes a sense of sympathy, but whose actions are still deplorable.

Li'l Bit, who is played by Heather Ovalle, eventually ends the inappropriate relationship between herself and her uncle Peck, but only after years of being manipulated and mistreated. It isn't until her character reaches adulthood and leaves home that she finally pushes him away. According to Ovalle, playing her part was not easy at first. For a long time it was difficult to put herself in the place of Li'l Bit.

"She kicked my ass," Ovalle said, when I asked her what it was like.

Overall, it was an uncomfortable show, but in a good way. It helps bring about the realization of how terrible sexual abuse really is. It made it clear that not all predators

are the stereotype. Sometimes they are people you really care about.

Considering the obvious difficulty of the roles, the actors and the director should be very proud of the work they did. The show is worth seeing. It tells an important story about life, and especially about family.

Now showing at the Osterman Theater
"How I Learned to Drive" by Paula Vogel
March 5-7 at 7:30 p.m. and March 8 at 2:30 p.m.



Contributed Photo

INTERVISION: Local band wins at Independent Music Awards

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There will be a showcase held in New York City this October, and the band hopes to be invited to play there. The bands that play will be chosen from all the winners from this year's Independent Music Awards.

Walker, who plays the keyboard and sings backup vocals, said they all met in the jazz program with Lonnie Klein. That's where they discovered Stevie Wonder, who is a big inspiration for everyone in the

band.

Walker explained, "Discovering Wonder was hearing what (jazz) music was supposed to be."

Walker told about some of his other musical inspirations, which include Steely Dan, Lyle Mays and Michele Camille.

Creighton explained his role in the band, "A vocalist and a writer." To compose he uses synthesizers, pianos and Rhodes - a tool to create funky beats.

Creighton was informative about some things that inspire him to write

music, including emotions, documentaries, really good movies, going to shows, videos of music, human interaction and life in general.

To those who haven't yet heard Intersivision's music Creighton said, "It can be described as jazz infused soul rock."

Walker agreed by describing it as a blend of Jamiroquai, Steely Dan, and Stevie Wonder.

The band members are always working on improving, and most of them take music lessons.

Creighton said he "takes lessons from a pop vocalist and hopes to start teaching soon."

Walker also takes vocal lessons and performs solo piano shows.

Creighton explained that the next big goal for Intersivision is to, "put out another album, which is a huge project involving lots of money to do the recording, duplicating, hiring players (saxophone and horns), publicity, and whether to release locally or nationally."

Walker explained that the group is really talented. Their main goal is to get better as players and as a band.

He said, "(The) sky is the limit and there is no ceiling to how good they could become."

Another goal for Walker is to, "Open for a major name or be the major name."

He said that they also, "refuse to sell out and in the past have had

offers from large labels to write generic pop music and turned it down."

Intersivision has already opened for a few different big names including Lifehouse in Boise, Idaho; Stormlarge at the Crystal Ballroom here in Portland; and the Neville Brothers in Bend.

This summer Creighton hopes to tour in Los Angeles, CA and travel to the East Coast in the autumn as a part of the Independent Awards Showcase.

Members of the band have some advice for any aspiring musicians.

Walker said, "Never stop practicing your craft and never think you're good enough." His biggest piece of advice is to "dream big."

Creighton said, "Yes, absolutely. Get a day job and keep it. Keep it your art and not as your income. Once you turn it into main source of revenue, you end up prostituting your craft, and what are you left with after that?"

Creighton also participates in another band called Joey Porter Tribute Band and they play funk tributes by such artists as Stevie Wonder, Sly and the Family Stone and Herby Hancock. The band consists of five to 10 members depending on the show.

Creighton described the music as, "pure freakish playing."

One reason Creighton enjoys playing in Intersivision as opposed

to other projects because, versatile and all contribute to deliver songs together."

Besides here in Oregon, the band has, "toured Utah, Idaho, and, California." Walker. The band usually tour several times a year.

Creighton said, "Besides weekend tours, we usually do one three week tour, and one to two week tours per year."

Many people may think it's on the road for any band, but it's a lot of work.

But, Creighton explained, "It's rough on the road, and a lot of partying can wreck the shows, especially being a bassist or guitarist."

Creighton also said, "You can't get away with it as a bassist or guitarist."

Creighton also said, "It's not easy, but it's not, a lot of hard work."

Quite often, Intersivision at the Aladdin Theater and Mak's right here in Portland next local show that the playing is at Jimmy Mak's a jazz joint located at NW Davis. Showtimes can be found at jimnymaks.com and usually of, "jazz with a fringe of Soul," explained Creighton. Mak's has free shows every night and Intersivision will be there on April 11.



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