

College theater opens curtains once again

Live shows return after 20 months

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Clackamas Community College's live theater program returned to Niemeyer for its first production in almost 20 months with the show "Private Eyes," written by Steven Dietz and directed by Jim Eikrem. The small cast of five kept the audience at the edge of their seats while going through the twists and turns of this "comedy of suspicion," as Eikrem would call it.

Opening night of "Private Eyes" was on Nov. 18, and ran through Nov. 21. Prior to the pandemic, the fall production would perform for two weekends equalling nine shows, but with COVID-19 restrictions, the theater program made the hard decision of reducing the number of performances to one weekend with four shows. Along with the decreased number of shows, the audience was limited to 57 people, which is about 1/4 of the theater's capacity of 238.

Eikrem made a remark about the limited audience size in relation to the past showing of the fall production. "We had to turn some people away to maintain the COVID policy, and although we were sorry about that, it was encouraging to have sold out houses and know that people really wanted to come back to live theater!"

The department is in high hopes after making its grand comeback with the fall play. They are currently looking at their schedule to see whether the numbers of shows will increase in winter term.

The fall play was one that required audience members to stay engaged to understand the journey the characters. The plot thickened with every new scene. One of the actors, Traveler Gates, said, "I would say audience members keep your ears out for lines that are repeated." The production was set in a casting room, restaurant and therapist's office. The set, which included a small table and chairs, was straightforward yet used in a way that gave the simple items so much drama.

"Private Eyes" had many well-written monologues for the male lead, Matthew.

Along with fabulous speeches, Jacob Dreyer, who played the role of Matthew, said to The Clackamas Print that his favorite thing about being a part of this production was "that I get to be insane. And I love it. I get to go out like a crazy whirlwind. Like I'm neurotic and crazy, it's great — that's my favorite, like Gene Wilder, I just get to go over the top."

The cast was masked throughout the entire play. Members used plastic see-through masks for audience viewers to get some normalcy while still upholding to COVID-19 guidelines.

Many of the cast members mentioned the masks being annoying and uncomfortable, but Gates told The Print, "Personally, I have gotten used to the mask. I think it would be honestly a little bit weird to go out in front of a bunch of people without [the mask]."

Audience members were expected to follow the common COVID-19 guidelines of wearing a mask indoors and to practicing social distancing.

Live theater on campus will return again in winter term with a production of "Red Herring" starting on Feb. 24.

*"I get to be insane,
and I love it."*

— Jacob Dreyer



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH LOHMOLDER