

Theater

is the outsider in the mathematical world shared by her sister and late father, and she never really gets it. McMahon as Claire puts across a discernible bewilderment at Cathy, trying to "fix" whatever she sees. It goes to McMahon's credit that I wanted to wring her sweetly domineering neck.

So where does the title of the play come from? It refers mainly to mathematical "proofs" Robert scribbled away at in dozens of notebooks during his last mentally imbalanced years.

Hal, a young math professor and Robert's former student, thinks there may be something of value in those notebooks. Drumm plays Hal with great comic timing, an earnest math geek often speaking of the partying prowess of his kind and their rock

band. But when it's time for the comedy to stop, Drumm has a harder time holding up his end of the fort. His expressions lack emotional depth, and the sexual chemistry between him and the prickly, vulnerable Cathy can be unconvincing.

As Hal combs through Robert's notebooks, Cathy's grief is mixed with fear. For Cathy is afraid that, along with inheriting Robert's mathematical genius, comes the danger that she herself may someday regress into a blithering, eloquent fool. In this poignant play, she must first convince the others around her before she can stop believing it herself.

A 2001 Pulitzer and Tony award winner, *Proof* appears at the Lord Leebrick Theatre through Oct. 29. **EW**

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