

'Nerd' features comedic chaos and a heart-warming twist

BY SAM WRIGHT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

The Opal Center's production of "The Nerd" nails the comedic voice of Larry Shue rather well. With only two acts in the entire two-hour play, the plot line is heavily weighted in its layers. Among all of the funny slapstick scenes, there is an even deeper plot that is revealed at the very end.

The play takes place in Terre Haute, Indiana in the late 70s and follows the life of an architect by the name of Willum Cubbert, played by Jeremy Schaefer. Schaefer's character can be described as gentle and reserved. The opening scene starts with Willum being surprised by his two friends Axel (Bob Cowell) and Tansy (Mollie Peterson). Tansy and Axel see the frustration and despair with Willum's current job designing a hotel for a wealthy business man and through sarcastic dialogue, it is divulged that Willum is unable to make

more bold life choice to bring him out of his sullen state. As the plot develops, the audience learns of Willum's Army pal from Viet Nam who saved his life. Being unconscious during battle, Willum never actually met Rick Steadman (Gil T. Rodello) until he unexpectedly shows up at his door during the night of Willum's birthday celebration. Steadman ends up being a goofy and insufferable guest who overstays his welcome. His ridiculous banter, brought on by the energy of Rodello, strongly reinforces the title of "The Nerd." Willum, who is too shy to be rude, now has to figure out how to get rid of Rick, who has already caused enough trouble with his employer Warnock Waldgrave (T. Sean Prescott).

Perhaps the most eye-catching aspect of the play is the set design. Shelly Dax and Wm. Campbell used the limited stage-space of the Opal Center efficiently and artistically. The wallpaper, doors, windows and décor

truly brought out a 1970s apartment that reflected the gentle personality of Willum.

Within the cast, Rodello's energy surely stole the crowd with his ability to appear as the worst houseguest imaginable. But it would be a crime to ignore the very subtle nuances of smaller characters. Susan Monahan plays Clelia Waldgrave, the wife of Warnock. Monahan's ability to portray a calm yet quietly manic wife and mother was a small but charming addition to the dynamics of the first act. Even Cowell's portrayal of a cynical and sarcastic drama critic was a potent ingredient of the comedy.

The play ends in a sweet twist, and regardless if viewers can see it coming or not, it brings the play full circle, addressing issues brought up in the beginning of Act One, giving the play a perfect sentimental ending.



From left to right: Gil T. Rodello, Bob Cowell and Mollie Peterson help bring the Larry Shue play to life at Cottage Grove's Opal Center. photo by Shelly Dax

CGHS drama, music to present 'Singin' in the Rain'

Cottage Grove High School's music and drama departments will present iconic American musical "Singin' in the Rain" on May 6, 7, 13, 14 at 7:30 p.m. and May 15 at 2:30 p.m. in the CGHS Cafetorium.

The show stars Bradyn Debysingh as Don Lockwood, Cyra Conforth as Kathy Selden, Megan Schneider as Cosmo Brown and Chloe Leczel as Lina Lamont. Other cast members include Taylor Hollowell, Madeleine Sisson, Kathryn Pearson, Kristy Rodrigues, Jaydene Swearingen, Riley Quimby, Anthony Trujillo, Keely Galbreath, Yuka Mori, Alayna Pearson, Sarah Sisson, Kyle Carrillo-Enders, Alaura Hornor, Alberto Lepe, Destiny Duerst, Samantha Fisher, Cayla Russell, Emily McDonald, Danny Lucking and Larah Mueller. Cost for this production is \$5 for students and senior citizens and \$10 for adults.



From left to right, Cyra Conforth, Bradyn Debysingh, Megan Schneider and Chloe Leczel star in "Singin' in the Rain." Photo by Sarah Sisson

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