

WPCC drama: different path

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Drama Review

Dennis Jones, whose animated portrayal of the boastful lover/cowering husband is a delight. Sandra Leonhardt plays Tamanoi, the karate chopping wife. No fake punches for this crew, the karate scenes between Jones and Ms. Leonhardt are very realistic.

Throw in a wisecracking servant, Taro (newcomer Toby Stephan) who also must take a few knocks from both husband and wife and a couple of assumed identities, and you have the formula for not just Kabuki comedy but comedy that is universal.

Like the Oriental stage, which is solely a male tradition, this WPCC production has two men portraying women. Greg Young and Edward Max are the wife's maids, Chieda and Saeda. These two "Tootsies," wearing their pink jackets and fluttering their fans are as convincing as Dustin Hoffman — the icing on the cake.

The chorus leader is Arvis Boughman and the chorus members are Linda Old-Payne and Mary Lou Furr. This being the third production of Drama 120 that I have seen, many of the faces are familiar. It should be noted that the delivery of lines and movement about the stage has become more confident and natural with each performance.

The third view from Japan, titled, "Patriotism," is a reading of the short story by Yukio Mishima. This powerful story details the ceremonial suicides of a young Japanese soldier and of his wife. Although the philosophy and culture surrounding the act of harikiri are so foreign to the Western mind, the account is read magnificently by Cheryl Oxford, Greg Young and Linda Old-Payne. This very unsettling story raised several questions

and is most thought-provoking. "Patriotism" is a bold undertaking extremely well done.

Because of the detailed descriptions in "Patriotism" there is a 10-minute intermission before it, and a supervised play area for children during the reading is provided.

Whether you bring the children or leave them at home; whether you bring your spouse or leave him at

home, "Man and Wife: Three Views from Japan" is tender, funny, romantic, gripping.

(Performances for "Man & Wife: Three Views from Japan" continue tonight and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the WPCC Moore Auditorium. Admission is \$1 for adults, 50 cents for children.)

Western Piedmont Community College Drama 120 has an exciting program in its latest production, "Man & Wife: Three Views from Japan."

Under the direction of Cheryl Oxford, "Three Views" deviates somewhat from past offerings in that it is three short works and becomes more of a reader's theater in the first selection, "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter" and last selection, "Patriotism."

Those who have enjoyed past productions by WPCC Drama 120 will not be disappointed as the second play, "The Undercover Lover" is a light-hearted comedy.

"The River Merchant's Wife" is performed by Lorrie Lane. According to the program, "Merchant's Wife" come from the verse of Rihaku and was translated by Ezra Pound. Unfortunately, this gentle reading is preceded by the chorus and the prop men taking their positions on stage, creating a bit of confusion for the uneducated in Japanese theater, namely me. I would have preferred a brief voice over introduction as is used before "Patriotism," and leaving the fanfare for the lighter, "Undercover Lover."

"The Undercover Lover" is an example of Kabuki theater, the traditional theater of the Japanese middle class. Placed between the other two works, "Undercover Lover" is in sharp contrast to their themes of marital love and fidelity as well as a contrast of styles.

Until you become accustomed to the onstage presence and movements of the prop men, Bob DeVries and James Pearson, they can be a distraction. After that small problem is overcome, sit back and enjoy as the action revolves around an unfaithful husband and a domineering wife.

The husband, Ukyo, is played by