Drama Shop Presents 'Entertainer'

The Dramashop production of "The Entertainer" was, barring some poor singing, excellent. It was a production of much higher caliber than most people would think the Institute capable of. The play's message was conveyed very well, by Mike Mesker as Archie Rice, and the scenery was almost professionally designed.

Archie Rice is the son of a famous music-hall entertainer, Billy Rice. His father left the business when it was beginning to wane, and Archie, following blindly in his father's footsteps, will not admit that the music hall is dying, that it is becoming one of those relics of the past like the speakeasy. His attachment to this life is indicated by the rather smooth scene shifts from the music hall stage to his own home, indicating that the two are really one in the same. He really lives the part of "the entertainer."

The story of the play, then, is the forces which ultimately compel Archie to leave the business, to destroy not just his living, but all of life as he knew it. Prime among these forces is the death of Billy, whom Archie had brought back to the stage in a last-ditch stand to keep his show open. The music hall killed Billy.

The role of Archie, designed specifically for Laurence Olivier, was carried off quite well by Mr. Mesker, but unfortunately he does not have the voice for singing those music hall numbers. The best acting was, however, that of Faye Dunaway in the role of Jean, Archie's daughter. She made one realize that the play was her story, too, of how she found that the man she thought she loved had nothing in common with her due to their different backgrounds.

"The setting was basic to the play, and the Dramashop production arranged it remarkably well. Archie's home and the music hall stage were one in the same, and a partition with nude girls on it would rise and fall as Archie moved back and forth between the two. Those scenes, which took place outside this sphere of influence, such as Billy's funeral, were staged behind a semi-transparent curtain, giving the figures a shadowy and not clearly distinguishable, a definitely other-worldly.

"The Dramashop staff is to be complimented on this production.

Warren Winscombe'54

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