Dramashop’s last set of one-acts ambitious

By Kant Fisman

What? No instant replay? Those who went to Dramashop one-act plays over the weekend felt their tired brains were met with a surprise, for the plays being offered were not of the class that one can just sit and watch mindlessly. Indeed, many probably wished that they could have seen them several times before attempting to decipher them.

Samuel Beckett’s *Embers*, the dramatized psychoanalysis of a man, Henry (Jerry Epstein ‘78), who is constantly speaking aloud to himself and to his long-dead father about the “realities” of his world, was perhaps a touch too ambitious to be attempted on such a short rehearsal schedule. Dramashop allows nine days from the time its one-acts are cast to opening night in which to rehearse.

Alanna Conner produced the play admirably, and the cast appreciated the circumstances, but the play dragged noticeably during parts of Henry’s long monologues, and no doubt a few extra days of preparation would have been desirable.

It is difficult to criticize Jerry Epstein’s portrayal of Henry for approximately two-thirds of the play is devoted to his monologues. It is a tremendously difficult part because of the depth of character required to pull it off effectively. Epstein’s performance was pure for a college actor, though lacking life in some places.

Gayle Ehrenhalt ’78, as Ada, was a much more fluid character and much more believable. She contrasts well with Henry, providing a basis against which he can be more easily understood.

Set design by David Muller ’77 was excellent. The scenery, several large boulders against a rocky background and a cold blue sky, added much to the atmosphere of the play. Lighting by Mitch Hollander ’78, was reasonably effective, but transitions between areas were often abrupt and distancing.

*A Slight Ache* written by Harold Pinter and directed by David Silverman was technically well presented, although the meanings of all its subtleties were not made clear.

The play deals symbolically with Edward—a middle-aged man approaching the doorstep of old age. He fears the oncoming effects of the aging process and refuses to accept them or to discuss them with his wife, Flora. The playwright introduces the character of the Matchseller, a very old man who never speaks and seldom moves throughout the entire play, to act as a foil to which Edward and Flora may display their inner selves.

Edward is a feat of concentration requiring a great deal of talent and practice. Settings by Michael Conner ’77 made excellent use of the small size of the stage to depict the dining room, study, and study of the couple’s house.

Following Dramashop tradition, the shows were followed by a question-answer session at which members of the audience were able to discuss the plays with the cast. A Perry Mason type of questions, piecing together any parts of the plays which remained unclear in their minds.

Perhaps the necessity for such a critique to tie up the loose ends is a comment on the productions themselves. Like the famed “tie-up-the-loose-end” scene at the end of a Perry Mason’s case, Dramashop almost apologizes for making the plot too difficult for many in the audience to follow. A bit more time spent working on the original presentation would seem a much better solution.


The celebrated Spanish classical guitarist Narciso Yepes will give a concert on Sunday, March 20, at 3pm in Kresge Auditorium. The concert, sponsored by the MIT Music Section, is open to the public free of charge. Yepes program includes works by Fernando Sor, Luis Milan and Isaac Albéniz.

*The Song Cycle as Envisioned* will be held in the MIT Music Library (Rm. 14E-109) at 5:30pm on Thursday, March 17. Arthur Komar will give the lecture and will accompany at the piano tenor Rufus Hallmark who will sing the collection of songs. Both Dr. Komar and Dr. Hallmark are members of the Music Section in the Dept. of Humanities. The lecture is open to the public and is free of charge.

Soprano Linda Terry and pianist Victor Rosenbaum will be performing works by Schubert, Vebens and Mozart on Thursday, March 17, at 8pm at the Community Music Center, 48 Warren Ave. in Boston. All concerts are free and open to the public. For more information call 482-1749.

The Quincy House Music Society, a student-run, non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of jazz in the Boston area, is planning to reopen. The concert, which will be held at the Wilbur Theatre for a seven-performance engagement beginning on Wednesday evening, March 16, will give performances Wednesday through Friday evening at 8pm, Saturday at 7 and 10pm and Sunday at 3 and 7pm. The Wilbur Theatre box office is now open from 10am to 6pm and mail orders may be sent to the theatre, 252 Tremont St. For more information, call 423-4008.

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**Compton Awards**

The Karl Taylor Compton Awards are the highest awards given to students by the Institute community and reflect the belief that real excellence and devotion to the welfare of the MIT community in any area, with emphasis on lasting or sustained contributions to the MIT community as a whole, should be recognized.

Send nominations to the Awards Committee, Room W20-345

**Murphy Award**

The James N. Murphy Award is given to an Institute employee whose spirit and loyalty exemplify inspired and dedicated service, especially with regard to students.

**DEADLINE DATE: APRIL 11**