Tech Show '80 rockets to success


In its first full scale production after an eleven year slumber, Tech Show is launching its return with There's No Space Like Home. This play is a whimsical science fiction musical about a nerdly eleven year slumber, Tech Show -is

launching its return with

Like Home.

Packed with scientifically oriented gags and punchlines, the show has been completely written and produced by MIT students.

The play focuses primarily on Green- table (Eric Caplan '80), a nerd marooned on an asteroid along with a collection of typical scientists and androids. The plot is built around Green-table's attempt to escape from a company of marauding space pirates. These pirates, headed by the fierce Bluto (Eugene Becker '81), wish to capture the hapless nerd and sell him off as a slave to a planet of dogs.

To complicate matters further, each man falls in love. The occasional presence of Jack (Jerry Stringham '81), a lost space traveler, completes the cast. Most of the acting is reasonably well done; mention should also be made of Dr. Banooty, a heavily accented scientist ably portrayed by Lorenzo Sedan '81.

The finest job of the evening is done by Jim MacArthur '83 in his portrayal of Roger, one of the space pirates. MacArthur is completely convincing throughout the play, although his part is a relatively minor one, he does an excellent job with it, instantly establishing himself as a likeable character. His one song, "Left All Alone," is one of the show's best. Unfortunately, the script never attempts to develop his tale further.

In contrast, Eugene Becker's portrayal of Bluto does not work as well. Bluto is supposed to be a cruel, feared pirate, but instead he comes off almost as a farce. His "bloodthirstyness" is confined to an occasional grimace and his raspy shouting. It is essential to the play that Bluto be convincingly evil or at least unlikeable; it is hard to believe the stories circulated about him when confronted with his smiling dances and neatly combed hair.

The show itself opens with a rather clever twist on the omission of the first act. The pace becomes very slow, however, as the emphasis shifts to storytelling in conversations rather than real action. Fault for this seems to lie primarily in the script. There are also numerous problems with blocking and choreography throughout the first half. For example, the background and the plot emerge from dialogue that 'takes place while the actors stand around. Excessive reliance on puns and gags is employed to keep the show alive. After the intermission the pace picks up somewhat, with the second scene in the third act probably the high point of the musical. Unfortunately the final scene is anti-climactic: the plot conclusion is thrown away for a few punchlines.

Aside from the plot, the show also has a total of 13 songs, not including the opening overture. The music is excellently written and skillfully performed; the lyrics are good and the tunes are catchy. But the music doesn't always mix with the rest of the play. Many of the songs are completely at odds with both the action and the mood on stage; for example, in "Lucy My Love," the wimpy Green-table is instantly transformed into a smooth, dramatic singer — only for the duration of the song. Such transitions only confuse what the character development there is, and ultimately detract from the performance.

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Juniors

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Sittings run from April 23-25, and April 28-May 2, 9 am to 12 noon, 1 pm to 5 pm.