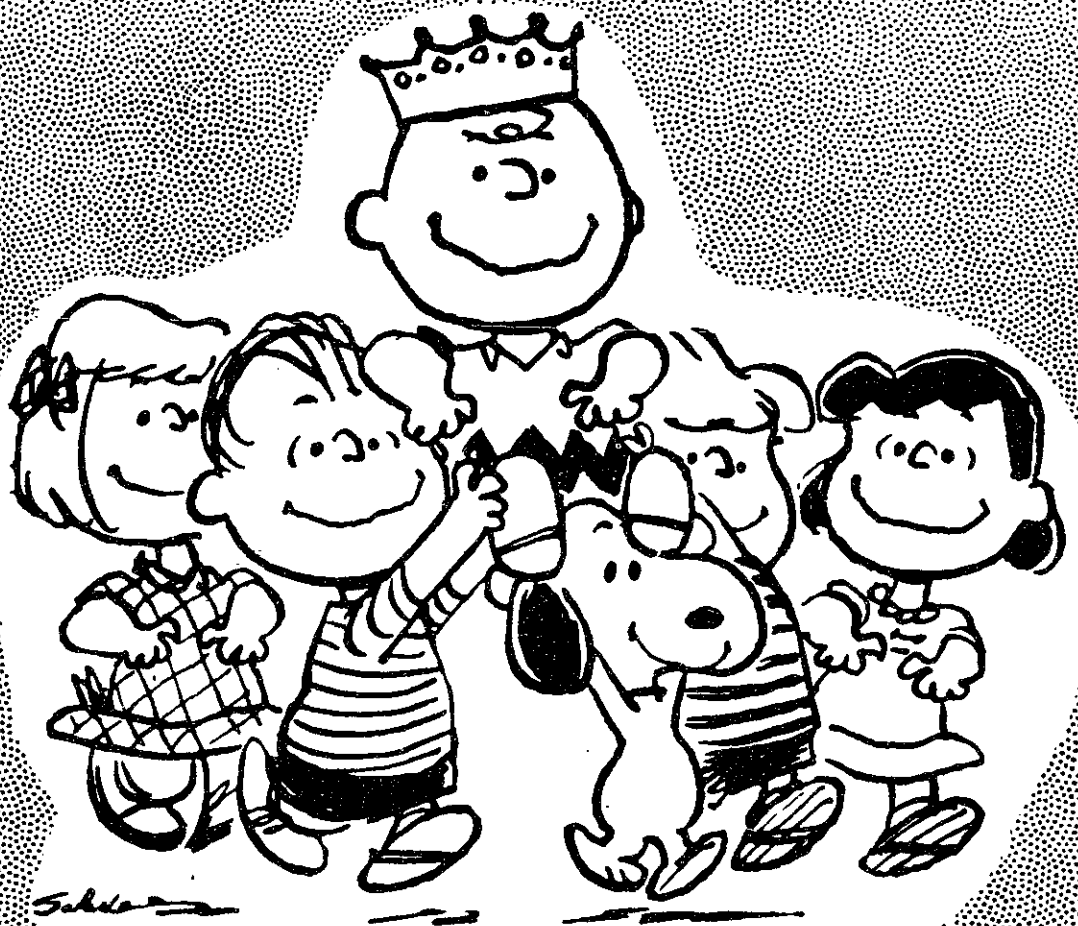




"YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, CHARLIE BROWN"



The Musical Theatre Guild's production of *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* this past weekend was a taste of the best that could be expected from a generally weak play. It is unfortunate that the MTG selected this particular show for their January performance, for much of their hard work was lost in the debilities of the script they handed themselves.

You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown is an anthology of several of the best scenes that Charles Schultz created for his *Peanuts* comics series. The play focuses on six of the *Peanuts* cast: Lucy, Linus, Schroeder, Patty, Snoopy, and of course, Charlie Brown. The action is built around several sustained sketches dealing with subjects such as Charlie Brown's infatuation with the little red haired girl or the classic lost baseball game. A selection of very short gags is sprinkled liberally between these longer scenes. The weakness of the script is fundamentally two-fold. First, the play is far too episodic; the only links between the acts are the characters themselves. Secondly, if the jokes work and amuse the audience, the play moves on; if they fail, the resulting awkwardness destroys the mood of the play. Such a play is difficult to execute successfully even under the best of circumstances.

Laboring against these problems, the MTG managed to do a remarkably good job. The characters were well played and the staging was excellent. Perhaps the best — as well as the easiest — portrayal was that of Lucy, admirably done by Linda Schaffir. Her creation was the classic fust-budget: loud, pushy, and obnoxious, yet basically insecure. Brad Walters did a very

good job playing an egotistical and romantic Snoopy. The only character that seemed to have problems was Patty (Deborah Field); much of the blame for this, however, can be traced to the script. Of the characters in the play only Patty does not possess a distinct personality by the final curtain.

The actual performance moved slowly at the beginning, but the pace picked up in the middle and towards the end of the play. The cast did an excellent job in sustained scenes whenever the script allowed them to. For example, the baseball scene was well choreographed and lively. Even when chaos descended upon the team, order existed beneath the surface of the actors remained in character and amusing. The timing in the book review scene was exquisite; the skit was one of the best in the play as a result. The solo effort by Snoopy (Brad Walters) were also effective and entertaining.

The transformation of McCormick dining hall into a small theater was very successful; the stage was small but the action never seemed to be cramped by it. The music was performed well and did its part in holding the play together. The set was very simple but used to great effect, a good example being Snoopy's doghouse.

The MTG did an admirable job with *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* this past weekend. They managed to overcome many of the obstacles inherent in the play and offered an entertaining production. One can only hope that they will choose script more worthy of their efforts in the future.

Joseph H.

Humans and . . . who?



Michael Glickman of Someone and the Somebodies (Photo by David Shaw)

Human Sexual Response with Someone and the Somebodies at the Paradise, Friday, January 30.

What a deal. Press passes to see Human Sexual Response, with the added bonus of Someone and the Somebodies (. . . who?). A bill like that could even make a place like the Paradise endurable. . . well, almost.

Once nailed into my seat by a friendly usher (pronounced "bouncer"), I settled in for the inevitable delay. The trendies behind me were heard to say, "Stop joking, will you? What's the opening band really called?" I never heard the answer, because the Somebodies finally made it to the stage.

Someone and the Somebodies play a peculiar brand of what has been called "modal dance-trance music" — tight, precise, dark tunes. As they worked their way through a set consisting of their *Bomps on the Head* EP and other tunes, the similarities between the Somebodies and Joy Division became increasingly apparent.

The set peaked with "People Are Dumb" — a tour de force for bassist/vocalist Tristram Lozaw. The energy continued through "Workin' in a Coal Mine," a tune that features an amazing vocal trade-off between Tristram and lead guitarist Robbie Davis. Robbie's guitar playing is one of the best features of the Somebodies music; he runs his guitar through a synthesizer to get some incredibly strange sounds. Drummer Jonathan Coe and guitarist Michael Glickman also contribute to the band's jagged rhythms.

The set concluded with "She Lost Control" by Ian Curtis of Joy Division. This was intended, perhaps, to be an acknowledgement of their influences. The Somebodies performed admirably, providing an interesting set of very danceable music, but they could use a bit more stage presence.

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