Shakespeare Ensemble — peeling away masks of sanity

HAMLET
The Shakespeare Ensemble at MIT.
Directed by Kristin Linklater.
Kresge Little Theatre.
October 22-27, 8pm.

By JONATHAN RICHMOND

K RISTIN LINKLATER'S PRODUCTION of Hamlet grows ever in intensity, peeling away masks of sanity to reveal the madness and darkness beneath. The final scene is breathtaking; coordination could not be tighter; acting is tense and taut like the building blocks of larger-than-life proportions and the bodies fall in their marked places on the monuments to depravity.

Most remarkable of several excellent performances was that of Andrew Borthwick-Leslie '87, cast in the title role. In monologue Hamlet's soul was concentrat ed as a laser on the head of a pin. "Alas, poor Yorick," here we are exposed to heartbreaking and human compassion.

"To be or Not to Be" — no clichés here, but access to the brooding within.

Borthwick-Leslie's expressions of mad ness showed a man in blank distraction, through which the articulation of purpose still shone. His words were delivered with magnetic force, enhanced by unique fashion nuances for yet one more disturbing thought.

Also cap notched was the Claudius of Ju lian Friedman '88. What a lathome creep he made of him! How carefully was his gait studied to convey the false con fidence of a man woosed by a guile he can only hopelessly try to spurn. Claudius is projected all in the foreground; there is no depth to be seen below the cheap car dboard exterior. It is just as well for that depth which Claudius has is best not seen.

In Friedman's hands, its absence tells all. With Anne La Flamme '83 as Gertrude, Queen of Denmark, we have a dialogue of syrup, a pair of condemned puppets so journying in the jester's court outside Hell before being sucked down to their final damnation.

Eric Rinaldi '89 and LiAnne to its fore as the denouement approached. The exc onption on his face on hearing of his siter's death penetrated to the core. And yet thoughtfulness was hastened by lust for revenge as we see Ristad's character easily fall for the scheming of Claudius.

Ophelia was also shown at her most powerful as her end approached. Andrea McGinnis '87 endowed her with a tearful tenacity, madness without any of the purpose or control that dwell with Hamlet until the end.

Barry Davis '89 made for a lively Polon ius and several of the other minor parts were attractively played. A couple of the per formers could do with some improvement, it might be noted, but it would be churlish to point out their mistakes in general has so much to recommend it.

Despite the vigor maintained for most of the show, there were patches that lagged slightly, but the subtle lighting and dissonant sound effects combining subliminally could do with some improvement, it might be noted, but it would be churlish to point out their mistakes in general has so much to recommend it.

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