



THE MIX

THEY SAID IT

EDMUND BURKE: "A state without the means of change is without the means of its conservation."

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Lions and tigers and Clowns, oh my!



PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK



dressed four audience members in "thug" clothing and pantomimed, trying to teach them how to rap.

Everyone enjoyed his act, and it was evident why Barnum and Bailey claim he is the best clown around.

The elephants were one of the last acts. They stood on each others' backs, linked themselves trunk to tail, and stood on each other while one lay on its side to be stepped on. The elephants are the circus' biggest asset, and the audience loved their performance, thoroughly enjoying their many poses and balancing acts.

Altogether, the circus was wild and fast-paced. The human acts amazed everyone, even with slip-ups and short routines. The animal scenes were fun to watch, but one couldn't help feeling sorry for some of the creatures.

Overall though, the show proved why Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey's Circus is called "the greatest show on earth."

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PLAY REVIEW Show gets trapped in own dark humor

"DEATHTRAP"
Workshop Theatre

BY CARRIE PHILLIPS
THE GAMECOCK

A play about writing a play about the play you are watching — sound familiar? No, it's not a wacky stage adaptation of that Nicolas Cage movie; it's Workshop Theatre's production of "Deathtrap" by Ira Levin.

The play opens on Sidney Bruhl, an aging playwright who hasn't had a hit in years and suffers from writer's block. Played by South Carolina Shakespeare Company actor and director Christopher Cook, Sidney is describing a play he has just read: "A thriller in two acts. One set. Five characters. A juicy murder in Act One, unexpected developments in Act Two."

The play he's critiquing is also called "Deathtrap," and was sent to him by a former student. He tells his wife, Myra, that it's a good play, and he jokes about killing to take ownership of it.

Sidney invites "Deathtrap" author Clifford Anderson to his house to review some of the ideas he has for the play. This starts a chain of events that culminates in murder, betrayal and even a few laughs.

"Deathtrap" is designed to draw more laughs than it actu-

ally does; there are wry observations about theater production and directing that are funny to experienced theatergoers, but seem a little too much like inside jokes to be truly humorous to the whole audience.

This play is a dark comedy, but in Workshop's production, that's not as evident as it should be.

"Deathtrap" toys with the thriller genre's conventions, but to a generation raised on "Scream" volumes one, two and three, it's been done.

The discussion on typewriters and the references to Merv Griffin feel out of place since the play was never efficiently dated for the audience.

The costuming puts it in the late '90s to the present, but the play itself is supposed to be set when it was written — in the late '70s.

Cook's portrayal of the bitter, homicidal Bruhl reflects his extensive work in Shakespeare. He has a Shakespearean air about him, and it conflicts with his comic timing.

There are moments, especially in the second act, where he lets go and delivers the lines just as they should be, but he's not consistent.

As Myra, Becky Hunter (and her fabulous capacity to scream for minutes at a time) deftly cap-

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PHOTO BY MARK BISSETT/THE GAMECOCK

Jeremy W. Gingrich, left, plays Clifford Anderson, and Christopher Cook stars as Sydney Bruhl in "Deathtrap."

Circus still captivates audiences of all ages

BY JESKA GARRISON
THE GAMECOCK

Imagine clowns ... everywhere. This is how the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus began Thursday night at the Carolina Center. Clowns circled the arena in threes with slingshots and T-shirts, working the crowd with the sort of inner magic that all clowns seem to have.

The few-hundred spectators in attendance leaped and dove toward any flying shirt tossed near them.

Children in the audience stood on their chairs, pointing and laughing at their face-painted entertainers.

The crowd was stunned by a multitude of flashy acts. Some performers defied gravity and others rode on elephants and horses. Some balanced six times their own weight on their backs, and all exhibited the unique ability to awaken the child in every person.

A person could almost get dizzy trying to follow the eyes of the on-

lookers. The audience sat mesmerized, especially when the trapeze artist performed, in awe of the young woman's ability to defy gravity.

As the decorated horses emerged, they drew "oohs" and "ahhs" from the audience, yet the mood quickly changed.

During one trick, in which the horses were to run out of the ring backwards, the trainer tried to force one of the horses to run correctly.

The audience became uneasy as he cracked his fake whip on the ground near the wild-eyed horse.

After the other horses exited, the defiant horse was brought back into the arena to do what appeared to be laps around the circle. He was again coerced into repeating the trick, but did not complete it.

The horse's eventual procession backstage left the audience clapping — out of sympathy for the embarrassed trainer.

Then the clowns emerged and quickly erased the horse fiasco from the children's minds, and the acrobats then assumed their positions, flipping, spinning and hanging from each other.

The crowd happily watched as different acrobatic techniques were displayed in each ring.

Impressive as they were, the act lasted a bit long for the children, who began to lose interest.

The adults, however, couldn't seem to tear their eyes from the ring.

Intermission meant hungry kids and high prices — \$7 for a snow cone.

Despite the prices, parents bought not only food and drinks, but over-priced toys as well. Intermission lasted only fifteen minutes, yet nobody was late returning to his seats, nor was anyone empty-handed.

Tigers emerged on stage, and they appeared to have as short an attention span as the children in the crowd did. Most adults pointed and whispered to their kids to look at how beautiful the tigers were, but the children didn't seem too impressed.

The tigers were told to stand on their back legs, front two lifted, as if they were merely large housecats.

The audience cheered, but it was obvious that the tigers were not nearly as amused by their poses and jumps as their human on-lookers were.

The tiger segment of the show was short, but well performed.

Next, the No. 1 clown put on several skits, amusing the crowd. He

MOVIE REVIEW

'25th Hour' confuses viewers with underdeveloped ideas

"25TH HOUR"
Starring Edward Norton,
directed by Spike Lee

BY BEN ANGSTADT
THE GAMECOCK

There are two types of movies: meaningful and meaningless. "25th Hour," the latest effort from director Spike Lee, based on the novel by David Beinfelf, can't decide which category it wants to fall into.

It seems like there is a greater social message lying just beneath the surface of the film's melancholy exterior, but that message becomes too convoluted amidst the spontaneous flashbacks, weakly developed supporting characters, and forgotten story lines.

"25th Hour" centers on New York City native Monty Brogan (Edward Norton). Monty had just been convicted of dealing drugs, and the film follows him through the day before he begins his seven-year prison sentence.

As his last free hours tick away, he must say goodbye to his girlfriend Naturelle (Rosario Dawson), Father (Brian Cox), and childhood friends Frank (Barry Pepper) and Jakob (Philip Seymour Hoffman).

As time goes on, it becomes evident that Monty regrets his mistakes only because he fears the torment he will likely face once behind bars.

He is a selfish man who, in a strange dialogue with his own reflection, curses all things that he deems responsible for his choices in life.

Norton seems like a strange choice for this role. While he has played criminals and unsavory characters before, he is unbeliev-



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Edward Norton plays convicted drug dealer Monty Brogan facing a seven-year prison sentence in "25th Hour." Brogan recalls his choices that led him to his legal troubles.

able as a greasy drug lord.

The contribution of supporting characters to the overall plot should be important, but very little is ever revealed about his or her personas outside of how each relates to Monty. The minor exceptions to this are the long dialogues between Frank and Jakob.

Ironically, Frank is a Wall Street trader of questionable character, but he avoids the same fate as Monty, though he might deserve it more. It seems possible that Frank is meant to deliver a message about the stock-market scandals, but there are too many underdeveloped ideas for the audience to really understand anything that Lee is trying to communicate.

Jakob, meanwhile, is a genuinely nice guy with one slight problem: he is a high school English teacher who is attracted to one of his 17-year old students, played by Anna Paquin. It's the most interesting side plot, but

Jakob's story comes to a climax and then immediately ceases. After it ends, there is no dramatic purpose for his character.

Coupled with the film's rapid back-and-forth dialogue and open-ended conclusion, it's easy to leave the theater thoroughly confused about what just happened on the screen.

The one aspect of "25th Hour" that doesn't disappoint is its top-notch musical score. The somber jazz melodies that play throughout the film communicate Monty's despair and are outright beautiful.

While a worthy effort, "25th Hour" seems so undecided with what it's trying to say that it ultimately says little. Norton and Lee fans might still want to check this one out, but for everyone else, avoid the confusion.

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SHOW REVIEW

Band's modern sound draws growing college-age audience



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY COREY GARRIOTT/THE GAMECOCK; PHOTOS BY FORD DAVIS/THE GAMECOCK

Thomas Reed Band is, from left, David Reed, Nathan Reed, Will Hammond and David Baker.

THOMAS REED BAND
New Brookland Tavern
HHH out of III

BY ASHLEY VAUGHN
THE GAMECOCK

The Thomas Reed Band is not your typical college rock band.

Well, on second thought, it is. Lead guitarist David Baker, however, does not apologize for playing, as he calls it, "mainstream modern rock." His fellow band members, bassist and guitarist Will Hammond, drummer Nathan Reed and vocalist David Reed don't seem bothered with such a classification.

And considering the size of their following these days, why should they be?

Thomas Reed Band's dedicated fans braved freezing weather to attend Thursday's show.



PHOTO BY FORD DAVIS/THE GAMECOCK

The band plays its "mainstream modern rock."

Nathan Reed said: "Our fans are great. We got people coming out to listen to us, and everybody seems to enjoy themselves, you know, have a few beers and what not. Our concerts are really laid back. People can sit there for an hour or so and listen to some good rock music."

While the atmosphere relaxed during the mellow tunes, for the majority of the show no one was sitting. In fact, everyone danced, and the crowd seemed to know every word to every song.

During "Too Late" people shouted the refrain and held up their beers, toasting the band.

In fact, when asked to describe the most interesting or embarrassing thing that has ever happened on stage, Baker said: "I'm sure there's one, but for some reason it's real foggy. It has something to do with Coronas and Martinis."

It's refreshing to see a band that's so far from being trendy or pretentious.

While Nathan Reed said that it would be nice to sell "15 million records," the band members are

more concerned with staying true to themselves and to each other.

Baker explained that the secret to good stage presence is "just to be comfortable and be yourself."

"The cool thing about our band is that we've known each other for a long time. We've got more respect for each other and our music and more of a bond as a band than someone who was like 'I don't like playing with this band, I'm gonna put an ad in the paper and pick up this person.' None of us would quit on each other and we wouldn't kick any of us out of the band," Baker said.

Thursday's show culminated with two classic rock songs requested by the audience: Tom Petty covers "American Girl" and "Free Fallin'."

Thomas Reed Band songs such as "Distorted" reveal other influences, such as Matchbox Twenty. David Reed even credits Rob Thomas for playing a part in shaping his lyrics.

"I think that it's tough for us ... as funny as it sounds, having a mainstream modern rock sound because most people in Columbia, you know, they kind of stray away from that ... It's kind of tough to get people to come out and listen to music that's not jammy or heavy," David Reed said.

Baker also talked about the ob-

THOMAS REED, SEE PAGE 6