

"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" Great Play

By Amy Doan
Staff Writer

More than just eye candy, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" opened in Cal State Hayward's University Theatre last weekend and was charming, funny and creative.

Bursting with talent from the lovable cast, the show was captivating from beginning to end.

Director Jody Rice chose to use the revised script of Clark Gesner's original 1967 work based on Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" characters.

"This 1999 version has only improved upon the original show, and brought the Peanuts gang into the new century with style and grace," Rice states in the program.

With its characters singing and dancing on bright, cartoon grass under the Peanuts logo, which hangs above the left side of the stage, the production resembles Schulz's comic strip down to the tiniest detail.

The purposely oversized props (foot-long pencil, jumbo-sized remote control and humongous orange couch) remind us that the characters are children. The two-dimensional cutouts - school bus, clouds and trees - are hilarious.

Kevin Euler holds back nothing in his portrayal of everyone's favorite blockhead, Charlie Brown. Euler is unafraid of looking absurd as he flawlessly captures Charlie Brown's endearing awkwardness. In fact, Euler even looks like Charlie Brown, with his big, round head and childlike stare. (Euler, however, is not bald).

Snoopy, played by Adam Fresquez, is definitely the silliest character in the play. And who knew Snoopy could sing? In addition to all the crazy antics and funny faces, Fresquez has an amazing singing voice. He perfectly complements Euler's Charlie Brown.

Scenes in which Schroeder (Andy Miramontes) plays his piano while Lucy Van Pelt (C. Lindsay Cross) is sprawled across the floor in adoration are classic.

Miramontes is perfect as the melancholy Beethoven fanatic who walks with a slight hunch and does not return crabby Lucy's love.

Another one of the play's highlights is overly analytical baby Linus Van Pelt (Bong Dizon) and his almost romantic love for his blanket. Dizon performs one of the most ridiculous dances in the entire play with "My Blanket And Me," in which he sashays around the stage with the love of his life. Dizon makes you realize that there just aren't enough synonyms for adorable.

Sheba Howerton plays the self-absorbed and hyperactive Sally Brown. The energy and smiles required to conquer this role is unbelievable. Howerton carries it off well and dances as though she's on a Metabolife binge.

At any given point during the play you can glance back at the audience and fully expect to see a huge grin on each person's face. The play was 100 percent delightful and entertaining.

"You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" is wonderful, fast-paced and definitely one of Cal State Hayward's best plays in a long time.

With live pit musicians, lots of nutty song-and-dance numbers and nonstop energy, there really is nothing to complain about - well, except for the fact that maybe Pigpen (Mike Perez) should have had more lines and a bigger part. His costume, re-

sembling a potato sack after a Sharpie attack, is too clever to be hiding in the background.

Don't miss your chance this weekend to check out Charlie Brown and the gang before the play ends. Remaining show dates are Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets may be purchased in advance by calling (510) 885-3261.

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