

# SUN STAR

## Review: Theatre UAF puts on triple threat November 16, 2010

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Sun Star Reporter

Fri., Nov 12 saw Theatre UAF debut three one-act plays: "Can Can" by Romulus Linney, "Play" by Samuel Beckett and "The Bay at Nice" by David Hare. The event has been billed as "Can Can Plays the Bay at Nice." All three are directed by Stephan Golux, Assistant Professor of Theatre at UAF.

### Can Can

"Can Can" is composed of two love stories: one between an ex-GI and a young French woman and the other between a newly-wedded housewife and an older country woman.

Grace McCarthy (Young Woman) shines and the chemistry between her and Chioke Buckley (Ex-GI) is palpable. One cannot help but smile when she leaps into Buckley's arms, insisting he call her his "buddy."

Crysta Parks (Country Woman) and Bindu Gadamsetty (Housewife) deliver their lines well enough that at the end you expect them to embrace passionately and kiss. While it would have made for a more believable (and memorable) finish, they do not.

### Play

To say that "Play" is about three heads in a box would be to do it a disservice. However, it would be true to say that the only things we ever do see of

the actors (Elizabeth Allen, Jenna Weisz, and Brian Lyke) are their heads.

"Play" is an unhappy, if at times comedic, romp into adultery. The play is as much about the acting, as it is the stage. Allen, Weisz and Lyke are each contained in separate boxes that never move, with their heads being the only part of them we see. Because of this, the actors must make use of their voices and facial expressions alone. Not to mention the occasional bout of manic laughter from Weisz (Woman 2).

"Play" is very much an ensemble work, which makes judging one actor above another impossible. The cast of three performed admirably and it was pure fun to watch their heads in action.

However, the play is a Samuel Beckett piece, which means many viewers may find themselves confused. This is okay. The play begins at such a breakneck pace and is so visually engaging (despite being minimalist) that it's easy to get distracted. Large portions of the play are repeated which means that by the end, a viewer will probably "get" what the play is about, which is, as Lyke states, "Adulterers take note: never admit!"

### The Bay at Nice

While "The Bay at Nice" was the last of the three one-

acts, it is also the best.

Sophia (Codi Burk) is a thirty-something Russian who has lived in the Soviet Union all her life. Her husband is a member of the Communist Party, she has two children and most of her material needs are met. The problem, she says, is she lacks freedom. The freedom to be herself.

To fix the problem, she decides to divorce her husband and move to a small suburb in Leningrad. She asks her mother Valentina (Hadassah Nelson) for help. While Valentina declares that Sophia's actions are selfish, Sophia chastises her mother (a woman who has known freedom outside of the Soviet Union) for her lack of understanding.

One should see "Can Can Plays the Bay at Nice" for this act. Not only just for "The Bay at Nice" itself, but specifically for Nelson's brilliant performance as Valentina. One will dislike her, love her, envy her and be thankful one is not her. In fact, Nelson may be the best actor UAF Theatre currently has.

Despite the play being Thomas Petrie's (Assistant Curator) first performance, an innate talent will only continue to increase as Petrie matures. He was rigid at moments, but it was hard to discern if it was his own rigidity, or his characters. Burk and Pedro Lizardi (Peter) also gave solid

and endearing performances.

Of note are the minimalist stage design and the costuming. Mark Twain said that "the clothes make the man," and nowhere is that more true than in "The Bay at Nice." Every outfit is perfectly suited to the characters and brings out their personalities beautifully.



Valentina Nrovka (played by Hadassah R. Nelson) talks to her daughter about the professional importance of art as Sophia Yepileva (played by Codi Burk), her daughter, looks on in Saturday night's performance of "The Bay at Nice."



"Man," played by Brian Lyke talks posthumously about his disastrous affair in Saturday night's performance of "Play"