

Arts & Entertainment

Waiting for Godot: Review and Summary

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Essentially nothing happened and then intermission came. I turned to my friend and said "That was the most fascinating thing I've ever witnessed."

On February 16-21 the Meredith Ensemble Theatre performed Samuel Beckett's absurdist play *Waiting for Godot*.

The entire play is centered on Vladimir and Estragon waiting by a tree for Godot. They don't know him or when he's coming. The only thing they can do is wait. Every night since who knows how long he sends a boy to tell Vladimir that he is not coming tonight but will surely come the following night. The boy is always

fearful and like many of the other characters cannot remember from one night (or day) to the next. While they wait, Pozzo comes by with Lucky, who has a rope around his neck. Much is said, nothing accomplished and they leave. The next day Pozzo and Lucky return. This time Pozzo is blind and Lucky is mute. Then the boy returns, night falls, Estragon suddenly snoozes as Vladimir questions his existence one more time, and it is implied that the very same thing will occur the next sunrise.

The square theatre was set with chairs on three sides. Audiences faced a plywood screen with a projector whirling WWII newsreels. The ambiance of the theatre places the audience in what Steven Roten writes in his *Director's Note* as a "derelict drive-in," with the audience seated above the actresses' realm. The set remained constant through both acts with an old car seat in the center of the floor, and a desolate tree in the rear right. Downstage to the right mounted was a playground horse. Fences in the rear separated the waiting land from something else unidentifiable.

Sarah Koop, a Meredith junior, who portrays Estragon stomps on stage into the darkness. When lights come up, Estragon is vainly attempting to yank off his boots while desperately balancing on the playground horse. Sophomore Theatre Education major, Victoria Mitchell as the character Vladimir enters and immediately the two begin an enthralling repartee. Their exchanges are loquacious yet terse, for they always interrupt each other. Koop and Mitchell are clearly seasoned actresses. They performed the entire play with high energy and personal humor that aided Beckett's theme of questioning. Even with their backs turned, their speech was clear, interesting, and natural without yelling. Estragon - or "Gogo," as Vladimir calls him - often falls asleep and can't remember people met or recent events. Koop skillfully performs him as an interesting, pitiable, affectionate and fearful man who lives everyday like it's the only day.

Gogo spends the entire first act wearing one or no shoes, which makes it easy to distinguish between the two as they both wear torn,

horribly-fitting suits and dirty bowler hats. The entire cast is dressed in this bedraggled style, which contributes to the point that no matter how we carry ourselves, on the wrong end of a rope like the long-winded and exasperated Lucky or demanding and oblivious like Pozzo, we are all the same: dirty and damned.

Victoria Mitchell excellently portrayed Vladimir - or "Didi," as Estragon calls him - as a man who is trying to grab on to something else. Mitchell's Didi was contemplative, theological, and was cursed with remembering the previous day. Vladimir had the most purposeful actions and his interaction with other characters was my favorite part. Much of the dialogue that speaks to the theme of the show comes from Vladimir. Perhaps Beckett used Vladimir to put his own voice into the play. If so, Mitchell surely did the role justice.

For a review of the entire cast and/or if you would like to question your own existence, read the full story at www.meredithherald.wordpress.com.