

ENTERTAINMENT

THE BATTALION

Page 6A • Thursday, February 19, 2004

Life as an act

Texas A&M Aggie Players to host performance of "An Infinite Ache"

By David Schackelford
THE BATTALION

First date, marriage, careers, parenthood, bliss, pain, old age and 90 minutes to do all of it.

In "An Infinite Ache," which will be performed by the Aggie Players on Feb. 19-22 at the Robert Wenck Fallout Theater, life's passage shrinks to the modern attention span.

When senior theater major Shawn Rodriguez chose to direct "An Infinite Ache," he knew he had found something relevant to a college audience.

"(The play) has the ability to connect immediately with the audience, and I think it touches issues that people, particularly in their early 20s, are dealing with," Rodriguez said.

The drama-comedy visits the lives of a young couple, Charles and Hope, as their relationship is threatened by the unpredictability of reality. When the two meet, Rodriguez said, Charles describes his love-at-first-sight as "an infinite ache." As their future unfolds, they struggle with their identity as individuals and as a couple.

"The two characters are simultaneously searching for and trying to define love. The play is about their journey to do that," Rodriguez said.

Perspective slips and jumps along broad stretches of time, pausing occasionally to focus on a single moment.

Keith Neagle, a senior theater arts major, plays Charles. Neagle said portraying the play with sincerity can be a challenge due to the fast nature of the stage.

"It is a challenge because of the time shifts," Neagle said. "Certain scenes can be very heavy emotionally and you have to turn on a dime and do whatever the next scene is. It's a challenge to do it with truth, make it believable."

Keeping up with events in a world where a minute could be a year, a decade or just a minute may seem overwhelming for the audience. But, Rodriguez said, the dynamic nature of the actor-audience relationship in theater is ideal for such a task.

"We're all interested in doing theater that demands our audience be actively engaged," Rodriguez said. "You'll see a film and the audience is a passive observer; you sort of sit back and watch the movie happen. Theater in general demands that the audience be engaged."

In simple and practical terms, Rodriguez said, the set supports the illusion of growth and change depicted by the actors.

"When the play opens, we see a very basic, simple bare apartment that Charles lives in," Rodriguez said. "Then when Hope

PLAYS

who:

The Aggie Players

where:

The Fallout Theater

how much:

\$5

doors open:

Thursday at 8 p.m.

enters his life and his life becomes more complex, more things start appearing."

Rodriguez said all the action takes place in a bedroom, which allows for continuity.

"The set sort of grows and morphs as the relationship develops," Rodriguez said. "Objects are added and removed to mark intervals of time. The gradual changes help the world of Hope and Charles evolve as their relationship evolves."

Like the set, the characters do not endure exaggerated transformations.

Kelley Stolte, a senior double major in theater and speech communications, plays Hope. She said the characters retain much of their identity.

"As a human being grows with age, a lot of qualities and ideas change," she said. "The play is very realistic in that. Hope and Charles are still there by the end."

Rodriguez said the Aggie Players put on an average of two productions per semester at the Fallout Theater and another two on the main stage in Rudder.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHAWN RODRIGUEZ

Keith Neagle, senior theater arts major (left) and Kelly Stolte, senior theater arts and communications major play the young couple David and Hope in the Texas A&M Aggie Player's presentation "The Infinite Ache." The club will perform the play Thursday night at The Fallout Theater in Blocker Room 144.

"More student productions go up here. They're edgier. More traditional stuff gets done on our main stage," Rodriguez said.

The Fallout also hosts numerous 10-minute short plays that are written, directed, produced and played by students.

Neagle said an upcoming Web site will provide information on the Aggie Players and season schedules for the Fallout Theater and the main stage at Rudder.

The venue of the play, the Fallout Theater in Blocker room #144, has close to a 50-person capacity, making it an intimate atmosphere for "An Infinite Ache." The show starts at 8 p.m.

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Tonight: February 19

"Relativism, Truth, and Tolerance"

with Dr. Peter Kreeft

7:00 P.M. • Rudder Auditorium

Thursday February 19

Women's Lunch:

"The Role of the Body in the Spiritual Search"

with Lilian Calles Barger (President of Damaris Project)

12:30-1:45 P.M. • MSC 231 • RSVP: RHildreth@clm.org

"What I Learned from Sex and the City"

with Lilian Calles Barger

4:00-5:30 P.M. • Rudder 410

"Relativism, Truth, and Tolerance"

with Peter Kreeft

7:00 P.M. • Rudder Auditorium

Tommorrow!

Friday February 20

Catholicism and Evangelicalism: Are They Compatible?

by Dr. Peter Kreeft

St Mary's Catholic Church, 7:00 A.M.

(reservations please: info@aggiecatholic.org)

NOTE: This event is not just for Catholics.

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February 16-20, 2004