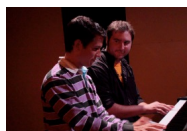


Written by Thom White
Monday, 19 July 2010 06:00

- [Buy Cheap Autodesk Maya Entertainment Creation Suite Premium 2012 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Buy Adobe Creative Suite 4 Production Premium MAC \(en\)](#)
- [Buy Cheap Microsoft OneNote 2013](#)
- [Buy OEM openPim](#)
- [Download Corel PhotoImpact X3](#)
- [9.95\\$ Lynda.com - Up and Running with Photoshop for Photography cheap oem](#)
- [79.95\\$ Microsoft Windows XP Professional SP3 \(32 bit\) cheap oem](#)
- [Buy OEM Autodesk Softimage 2012 \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Download Lynda.com - Flash Professional CS6 New Features](#)
- [Buy OEM Lynda.com - Create an Interactive Map with jQuery](#)
- [Download Microsoft Windows 8.1 Enterprise \(64-bit\)](#)
- [Buy Cheap 3D Home Architect Design Suite Deluxe 8](#)



Playwright Bert V. Royal's *Dog Sees God*, which is basically *Peanuts* set in high school, is tough to swallow; it's not easy to hear comic-strip characters - cherished for their innocence - cussing and talking about sex. Yet while it's offensive, the script is also deeply sad, something the Harrison Hilltop Theatre's current production doesn't quite grasp until the play gets really, *really* sad.

Instead of playing football, dragging blankets, or chasing the Red Baron, Charles M. Schulz's creations are now doing drugs, having sex, and questioning their existences. And while the likenesses of *Peanuts* figures are being employed for this show - even though no one is ever c

alled
"Charlie Brown" or "Lucy" here - these characters could be the kids who live in your neighborhood, and who play with your kids, and are their classmates. (Royal, I believe, borrows the

Peanuts

characters for

Dog Sees God

because they're familiar in their innocence - which helps drive home the play's point that life, beyond childhood, is

not

innocent.)

Chris Walljasper (a *Reader* employee) directs this dark comedy, and Thursday's opening-night performance struck me as an attempt to stress the play's humor more than its darker aspects -

Written by Thom White
Monday, 19 July 2010 06:00

at least during the first act. (Walljasper's direction seems to set

Dog Sees God

's underlying sadness aside until it fully surfaces, and overtakes the comedy of the script.) The production isn't bad, but could be more poignant throughout, rather than poignant mostly in Act II.



Sara King seems to grasp both the play's darker and lighter elements, conveying them remarkably well in her role as Van's Sister (whom we know as Lucy). I've enjoyed King's stage work since first seeing her in the Hilltop's *The Rocky Horror Show* last year, but this is the most powerful performance I've yet seen from her. King's single scene is marked with emotional highs and lows, eliciting laughter at one line and tears at the next. She doesn't seem to be *trying*

to be funny, instead allowing her humor to naturally surface on its own, and in her character's darkness, you pity her, hate her, sympathize with her, and somehow, also admire her.

Bryan Tank's performance as Matt (a.k.a. Pigpen) is impressive in its crass abandon, and he holds nothing back, it seems, as he shouts about sex while repeatedly thrusting his pelvis - which is shocking not only because this is a *Peanuts* character, but also because this is the man who just portrayed the subdued, honorable George in Harrison Hilltop's recent *Sunday in the Park with George*.

This portrayal, especially compared to his last, showcases Tank's awe-inspiring range as an actor.

Danny White's physicality as Beethoven (Royal's substitute for Schroeder) almost couldn't be better. The stiff-armed White doesn't seem to know what to do with his body, which is highly appropriate for a character on the receiving end of homophobic epithets - one trying to make sure potentially effeminate movements don't become catalysts for more ridicule. White also uses his facial expressions quite effectively, conveying his character's senses of hope, being loved, fright, and surrender. (While White's physical performance is notable, his vocal inflections are often lost in the *speed* of his speech; were he to slow down the pace, his performance could be as extraordinary as King's.)

You're a Good Play, Pseudo-"Charlie Brown": "Dog Sees God," at the Harrison Hilltop Theatre through Ju

Written by Thom White
Monday, 19 July 2010 06:00



HarrisonHilltop.com