

Chantel Ricks

Mr. Bengford

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Way Over the Moon

On December 11, 2009, I saw the hilarious play at Westmont High School called Moon Over Buffalo, written by Ken Ludwig. This comedic act was set in Buffalo, New York in 1953. In Moon Over Buffalo, George and Charlotte Hay are traveling actors whose daughter has come for a visit. Their daughter, Rosalind, means for her parents to meet her fiancé named Howard. However, before that happens, due to an affair that George has, the family finds themselves in disorder and confusion.

I thought Brandon Gross did a great job playing George. Brandon stayed to his character by expressing his anxiety well. By clenching his hands into fists by his side and pursing his lips, by stomping when he walked, and by running his fingers through his hair, Brandon was able to show the tension and pressure George was going through. What I thought was really impressive was that Brandon acted drunk for such a large amount of the show and kept it believable the whole time. He kept a swagger in his walk and I detected a credible slur whenever he spoke. In addition, Brandon's volume was very good and easily audible, even though there were no microphones. Happily, Brandon never spoke unclearly or too fast. While Brandon's character was drunk, Brandon did a great job emphasizing all of George's gestures. What normally would be a slight hand wave would turn into arms flailing. It was so funny when Brandon saw Howard, played by Tas Pelikan, and thought it was Eileen's brother. I really enjoyed when George came

out of the closet and pulled Howard in with him! My eyes were almost tearing up from laughing so hard. Brandon and Tas had to work together well for this scene in order to get the timing right as he swung out of the closet. I think Brandon did a fabulous job.

Tas Pelikan was another actor whose performance whom I was thoroughly entertained by. Playing Howard, Tas was a very convincing nervous wreck. Tas used the techniques of shuffling and a squeaking in his voice to show his panicky emotions. Furthermore, when Tas spoke he fidgeted with his hat and looked around the room in a jumpy way that made me feel uneasy even from the audience. I loved how Tas would transform Howard's meek character into a fearless weather man in seconds. As Tas deepened his voice, raising his shoulders (and occasionally an eyebrow), I could immediately understand that his character feels very confident when he is doing his job. I think Tas did a great job identifying his character's feeling. Not only was Tas audible, but he was always very loud. Whenever Tas laughed, it cracked me up! Some could consider his deep, elongated laugh out of character, but I think it was a very awkward laugh that added to the scene.

I loved the set for this play. The warm yellow walls were really inviting and all. Also, the unique posters on the wall made the setting homey and comforting. I think the set created the perfect mood. I really liked how I could see what was outside of the front door; there was a stairway going up, creating the feeling that the set was a basement. It was really entertaining with all the doors on set that created interesting and different entrances by all the characters. When the drunk George attempts to go on stage during the afternoon show, *Private Lives*, the warm setting quickly turned into the opposite—a cold, starry night. The sound effects were added very well to the show. When the phone was

ringing, it was so convincing that I thought it might be a real phone ringing. And when the family is looking for George, a suspenseful sound effect would go off whenever someone mentioned a specific word. It happened again and again...and not again? I was witty how by the third time, the characters expected to here the noise, but it never went off. During the scenes with the cast of *Cyrano*, an aggressive combat sound effect really added to the intensity of the sword fight scenes. As for the costumes, I think they the men's outfits fitted the time period well. I do think Rosalind's fitted pencil skirt and work jacket matched the time period, nevertheless, I think a thin waist belt to emphasize her waist would have been even better.

I think the audience really took pleasure in spending their Friday afternoon, laughing their time away. The audience responded well, except for in one scene that I remember clearly: Rosalind and Paul were laughing and the audience did not respond at all. On the other hand, I thought the scene was side-splitting! Everyone in the cast did a great job and created a highly amusing play. This show was directed and performed brilliantly. The cast clearly aimed for the stars and passed them by far...I would say they went right over the moon. Moon Over Buffalo was a cheery and heartwarming show that I would love to see again!