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Mr. Bengford

Tech Theatre 3

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Avenue Q

On January 14, I saw Avenue Q by Jeff Whitty at the Center for Performing Arts, directed by Jason Moore. This musical had the basic principle of Sesame Street gone bad. The characters were a mix of puppets as well as actual humans. Princeton is a young student fresh out of college. He starts his life in Avenue Q and learns how hard it is to live life in NYC.

Only one set was used throughout the entire musical. Three apartment buildings were jammed together to make Avenue Q look like a rundown neighborhood. The buildings were made of brick and wood, but there were all a brownish color to make the buildings look worn down, yet have a warm feeling to them. Having the set look this way was fitting because all of the characters were working on low budgets or weren't even working at all. The ground about five or six feet away from the buildings was painted a light brown-grey, while the rest of the stage was painted a dark grey to give a representation of a sidewalk and streets. The actors somewhat used this for their blocking in "There is Life Outside Your Apartment". To give the appearance of being inside the apartment, the lower windows of the building opened up to reveal a miniature size room inside. This was only used for the puppets, so it was fitting to have a miniature size room. A wall in the middle apartment was able to be removed so a bar could appear when all the characters go to the Around the Clock Café. The second floor of the apartments only had small windows. But the windows could swing open to reveal an actor and let them talk to someone on ground level. Some of the windows were also used as small cys to

only show an actor's profile, mainly in "You Can Be As Loud As The Hell You Want (When You're Making Love)". At one point one of the characters goes to the Empire State building. The actor was able to stand on the roof of the apartments as another piece came down to look like the top of the Empire State Building. The combination of lighting effects and the set made it look rather authentic.

Because there was only one set, lights had to be used to represent different places. When the characters were outside of the apartment in the daytime, the lights were brighter and mostly warm colors to represent the sun. During the night, lights were dark blues and purples, and stars would appear in the building and on the cyc. When inside, characters would mostly be spotted and a little light would be given off by a miniature lamp in the set. Every time the actors were thinking to themselves, he or she would be spotted and then also have a light with a gobo directly above him or her. The colors varied depending on the situation, but the gobo made things look more interesting rather than having a plain light shining on the actor. The upstairs windows had LED lights framing them to help show the audience where to look when there were multiple people in the windows. During the Empire State Building scene, lights pointed up from the middle of the apartment building to create an effect on the boards of the building to transform the apartment into the Empire State Building. There were also two fly in TVs that were used like they would be in the TV show Sesame Street. They would sometimes give the actor a greater knowledge on a subject or help supply information to the audience.

As my second time seeing this musical, it is still just as funny as the first time. The actors put on a great performance. Some of them had to portray multiple characters, but they never mixed up their accents and it was easy to tell when they were someone else. The technical aspects were very interesting, and yet relatively simple to understand.