

WASHINGTON HALL SPOTLIGHT

From king to don: a gangster take on 'Richard III'



Richard, Duke of Gloucester (Scott Wagner), left, woos Anne (Lena Caligiuri), right, while she mourns the passing of her husband in "Richard III."



Old Queen Margaret (Madison Liddy), second from left, chastises Richard (Wagner) at an Italian eatery while Anne (Caligiuri) and Hastings (Jake Imm) look on.

By GRACE MYERS
Scene Writer

The Not-So-Royal Shakespeare Company will perform "Richard III," a play which, contrary to the theater company's name, is all about royalty.

Taking place this weekend in Washington Hall, this powerful, classic play of a man starved for power and willing to manipulate or even kill those who stand in the way of the throne, is sure to engage and interest theater enthusiasts. Richard III is hated by many and feared by all and yet the audience still sympathizes with this cruel leader. A poignant tale of absolute corruption and a portrayal of the dangers of totalitarianism, "Richard III" is as gripping as it is powerful.

This production is sure to be entertaining for all, because of its original and interesting interpretation. Set in 1950s American gang country, "Richard

III" is directed by Jeff Eyerman, the Company Manager/Executive Director of Summer Shakespeare at Notre Dame.

"I honestly never really fancied myself a director, I like acting much more," Eyerman said, "but this summer I happened to watch 'The Godfather' in close conjunction with McKellen's 'Richard III,' and the similarities really struck me."

This interpretation makes the historical character of Richard III more accessible to the modern audience, as well as comments on the other instances of hatred and terror within history.

The audience sees how Richard resents his brother's power and happiness, suffers from a physical deformity and schemes to gain the throne of England. Using his deceptive personality, skills of political manipulation and ruthless will to kill those who stand in his way, Richard's reign of terror finally alienates him from the court and his own people.

Scott Wagner plays Richard III, giving an outstanding performance of an extremely complex character.

Eyerman explained the reasoning behind his decision to interpret Richard as a loathsome character.

"In the end, I think, it's just so much more fun to sit in the audience and look at this conniving, murdering, evil human being who wants to hear details about smothering children than it is to watch [him] grapple with his own humanity or some such tag line," he said.

Wagner is indeed capable of the role, having participated in several other Shakespeare performances at Notre Dame and in high school. Although he's headed for medical school, Wagner wanted the part of Richard for his last performance, stating how fun the rehearsals have been and his deep respect for all his fellow cast and crew.

"[Richard III's] one of the most difficult characters I've played. He's evil,

but there are sides that are very guilty and the audience has sympathy," Wagner said.

Eyerman's goal is for the audience "to leave the play feeling a bit like Lady Anne — walk in ready to hate the greatest villain in English history, but leave grossly captive to his honey words." Indeed, the entire cast of "Richard III" succeeds in bringing this about, as the audience can't help but wrestle with their mixed feelings about the volatile Richard.

This performance by the Not-So-Royal Shakespeare Company has a remarkable cast, crew and is an interesting and thought-provoking interpretation of a classic Shakespearean play.

"Richard III" will be performed on Friday and Saturday at 7.30 p.m. in Washington Hall. Tickets are available both through the LaFortune Box Office and at the door.

Contact Grace Myers at gmyers1@nd.edu

MOVIE REVIEW

Creepy-crawly movie 'Slithers' its way into theaters

By MARK BEMENDERFER
Assistant Scene Editor

"Slither" is must-see movie for true horror fans. Its success is derived not from the scares it creates, but from the atmosphere it inspires. A simple precursory examination of the movie wouldn't create very high expectations for the film. At first glance, the plot of space slugs and cannibalistic zombies seems hackneyed at best.

However, the film pulls off the absurd premise beautifully, and the audience's sense of reality is never mocked.

In 'Slither,' town beauty Starla, played by Elizabeth Banks, is married to the town rich man, Grant Grant, played by Michael Rooker. Unfortunately, their marriage is less than perfect and after a spurned advance, Grant goes off on the town.

While at a bar, he meets Brenda, played by Brenda James, and they go off into the woods together. While there, they find an asteroid and an alien life form. The alien attacks Grant, entering his body, and over

the course of the next couple of days, it begins to transform him into something less than human, spelling trouble for the small town of Wheelsy.

Written and directed by James Gunn, "Slither" pulls off the rare feat of being entertaining and engaging from beginning to finish. Whereas many modern horror movies lose their momentum about halfway through, "Slither" steadily builds to its inspired, grossed-out climax.

Part of this can be attributed to veteran screenwriter James Gunn. His screenwriting experience covers everything from the "Dawn of the Dead" remake to the live-action "Scooby Doo" films.

Part of the movie's success is also derived from the ensemble cast. Comprised of actors such as Nathan Fillion, Elizabeth Banks and the ever-excellent Gregg Henry, "Slither" manages a strong cast of smaller actors that work surprisingly well together. Fillion can be recognized from the television show "Firefly." He plays Sheriff Bill Pardy, a wise-cracking lawman who harbors a less-than-subtle crush on Starla.



Director: James Gunn
Writers: James Gunn
Starring: Elizabeth Banks, Michael Rooker and Nathan Fillion



Starla Grant (Elizabeth Banks) wields a shotgun against people-turned-zombies while town mayor Jack MacReady (Gregg Henry) looks on in horror.

Gregg Henry, an actor notorious for playing the jerk in movies, stays true to form as the arrogant Mayor Jack MacReady. Immediately amusing in his own way, Henry manages to become an incredibly sympathetic character despite the fact that a real-life equivalent would receive an opposite reaction.

Horror and sci-fi fans, the target audience for the film, will be the ones to get the most enjoyment out of it. Essentially an homage to an assortment of movies of both genres, the movie draws from others such

as "The Fly," "Night of the Creeps" and "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." While it helps to have a wide background in films such as these, "Slither" still proves entertaining for newcomers.

Gory and clever are the best words to describe "Slither." The sharp dialogue delivered by the cast, and extreme gore found within the film, should appeal to horror and sci-fi fans alike.

Contact Mark Bemenderfer at mbemende@nd.edu