

Sample Critique Analysis

The theatre show I chose to go attend was “Puffs Or Seven Increasingly Eventful Years At A Certain School Of Magic And Magic”, by playwright by Matt Cox and directed by Kristin McCarthy. The show has a crew of eleven acting on stage, along with designers, light, and sound. They put on a very entertaining play.

Puffs begin in 2015 and was originally meant to only be performed five times in The PIT theater in Midtown Manhattan. However, this quickly became a month of performances. Then nine months later a birth to a new stage in the New World Stages, also located in Midtown, Manhattan.

Everyone knows the story of Harry Potter and his friends at Hogwarts. Throughout the background of the play, the audience sees Harry, Ron and Hermione go about their adventures. However, Puffs is a side story of people in a different house, in the same year as Harry.

Wayne, acted by Jake Keefe (usually played by Zac Moon), is the main character. Accompanied by his two friends Oliver (Langston Belton) and Megan (Julie Ann Earls) he makes it through the magical school of Hogwarts. The play runs through seven years of Wayne and his housemates being underdogs and trying to come up just a little in the hierarchy of the school.

Wayne is put into the house of Puff which is a stand-in for the famous Hogwarts house of Hufflepuff. The Puff house all work together to try to overcome their troubles. Cedric (James Fouhey) who is the leader of the house sets the goal that the Puffs will be in third place within the house cup tournament instead of last “like every year”. If you’re not familiar with what these houses are, they are groups of students assigned to either Gryffindor (the brave), Ravenclaw (the smart), Slytherin (the snake everyone hates), and Hufflepuff (the... well... everything else they

lack to be in the other house). In the play the houses are signified with different names. Gryffindor is the Braves, Ravenclaw is the Smarts, and Slytherin is the Snakes.

The Puffs had poor luck as always in the play. Even so, they kept their positive outlook and good morals. There were moments of doubt and devastation, but a few students manage to survive.

One of the more comedic moments of the play was when Wayne was trying to learn how to do the summoning spell. When he utters the phrase “accio book” the book stays where it is. However, when he says just “book” and jabs his wand in the air, the book flies to him. I would have preferred for Cedric to say the words of the spell. The point was that Cedric is better than Wayne.

The play was also made to be very funny to people who were big fans of the original Harry Potter. For example, during the tri-wizard tournament, Cedric promises to teach Wayne everything he knows about magic when the tournament is over. This is very amusing and sad for Harry Potter fans because, as they know, Cedric dies during the last task of the tournament. Although they didn't show Cedric reappearing deceased the Hufflepuff house stood together as if they were in the crowd up stage on a platform. They were dressed in their colors with scarfs, hats, and flags.

Part of the experience of watching the play was that throughout the performance, there were brief moments to remind us that this was all occurring at the same time as Harry, Ron, and Hermione's adventures. The girl who played Susie Bones (Madeleine Bundy) also portrayed Harry. When onstage, Harry often had a mop to represent Ron and a wig on a wig head stand for Hermione. This was interesting because it showed that Harry was a side character, and Ron and

Hermione even more so. Harry entered the stage from the left or the right wings as if to signify that he was only on the sidelines (also it was great to see Harry played by a woman).

Overall there isn't much I would change about the performance. The costumes for me seemed simple, as if a child could have come up with them, which was exactly what was needed. It not only gave the sense of being young because Harry Potter is a children's book, but also made it easy for the actors and actresses to change when required. The scariest parts were not intimidating because of humor. Several cast members who had more than one role did an outstanding job switching between their characters.

There was one thing that quite bothered me. When I purchased my tickets I was informed that it was a family oriented play. I found out on weekdays it is meant for anybody above eighteen because it has adult content (those who know about THE PIT already know this). Weekends are meant for families. Weekdays are not.

In the end, it was pretty perfect. Clearly it was directed by a Ravenclaw. Or so the director claimed.