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The cast and crew of "Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead."



CB (Jordan Wommack, left) and CB's Sister (Megan Ward, right).

Cast members from "Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead."



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Fiona Scruggs

On Feb. 17 through 21, Radford University’s School of Dance and Theatre presented “Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead” by Bert V. Royal. The performance took place in the Hawes Studio Theatre with the audience surrounding the stage on all sides. It was perfect for a confrontational, yet intimate setting. The Director and Sound Designer was Zachary Bacon. The scene designs were led by Christina Viglietta and costume design was led by Clay Miller. The lighting designer was Jimmy Ray Ward.

This parody focused on the imagined twisted teenage lives and their issues of the “Peanuts” cartoon characters. The childhood friendships we had come to love are no longer present. Each character has grown into their own personality and unfortunately, they are nothing like their childhood personas. As “Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead” dealt with many serious subjects of sexuality, drug use, violence, and rebellion, this play was intended for mature audiences.

The play's opening scene began with a monologue by CB (played by Jordan Wommack) about how his dog died and his questions of the afterlife. CB had found his dog covered in blood after mangling his friend, the yellow bird. As a result, the dog was put to sleep. According to CB, "then everything went to hell." After the scene change, the audience met CB's Sister (played by Megan Ward), who changes her identity and interests constantly. CB and his sister furiously discuss whether or not to say a ceremonial prayer at the dog's funeral. They are the only ones in attendance, unfortunately.

In the next scene, we meet Van (played by Guy Ritchie), who is discussing with CB what happens to us after death. They addressed how things and ideas do not really define who we are in the big picture of our lives. Once the characters are gathered around the lunch table, they each explain to CB how sorry they are for not making it to his dog's funeral. Yet, none of them are truly sorry. It is at this point that the audience can fully realize just how much the dog's death has destroyed CB's life. The entire play revolves around the dog's death changed CB's interactions with his peers.

In a scene with CB and Beethoven (played by Forrest Goodwin), we learn that Beethoven still plays piano (and has become quite good, actually) and has been bullied by his supposed friends for years because he "acts gay." However, that is never a reason to bully. Although we learn that CB never directly bullied Beethoven, he never stopped it, either. CB is not the "good man" we had thought him to be.

This scene is also a major turning point because the audience learns why Beethoven was ostracized by his peers. After Beethoven's father sexually abused him, things became awkward for the friend group. CB continues to explain that he has not been able to move on since his dog died. The two characters realize that they have both been struggling emotionally. Suddenly, they kiss and the lights blackout.

The next pivotal scenes occur at Marcy's (played by Rebecca Haas) and Tricia's (played by Krissy Cralle) house party. Of course, the party begins with the characters dancing to the "Peanuts" theme song for comedic relief before the drama hits the fan. Beethoven comes to the party, uninvited. Matt (played by Landon Kime) has a major issue with this. However, CB goes to Beethoven and kisses him. This leads to an extremely confrontational fighting scene.

So many conflicted childhood feelings came to light, especially with Van's sister (played by Lexi Cohen). She has been institutionalized for several years because she lit "the little red-haired girl's" hair on fire one day in school because she was bragging about her virginity. The reason this

irritated Van's sister so much was because she had had an abortion a few days prior. Van's sister was simply sick of stereotypes.

In a later scene, CB and Beethoven discuss their sexuality with each other and whether or not they are boyfriends. Unfortunately, Matt then bullies Beethoven with death threats about being involved with CB to the point that Beethoven decides to commit suicide. At a counseling session, all the characters say things that do not have much value, especially now that Beethoven has died. Matt only received a week of suspension for his actions. Surprisingly, CB reacts quite insensitively to the situation.

The audience then sees CB's sister perform an excerpt from her one-woman play about her transformation in a cocoon. She explains that she stayed in the cocoon too long and became a human, which was much more than what she had wanted. CB and his sister discuss the purpose of life. At the end of the play, CB finally gets a letter from his pen-pal.

Essentially, the main message of "Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead" is that life happens whether we like it or not and we must keep going on. Nevertheless, we should always take the time to respect each other. We are all surviving by threads in this fabric of life. Some people's threads are a little more worn than others, yet are still hanging on. One can never tell how close they are to ripping.