



Universes collide in Theatre UAF's 'All in the Timing'

What do three monkeys attempting to write Shakespeare, composer Philip Glass buying bread and Leon Trotsky with the ice ax in his head all have in common?

In a regular setting, not much. But Theatre UAF's "All in the Timing" is not a regular setting.

Described as a "life affirming comedy of metaphysics," the play is a series of six shorts written by playwright David Ives.

Director Stephan Golux said the shorts explore many facets of life — history, music, philosophy — and ultimately what it means to be alive.

"They're all just little breaths of an idea," Golux said.

There's a great deal of exploration of universes, Golux said.

For example, in "Words, Words, Words," three chimpanzees attempt to write "Hamlet." In the short, a scientist tests the hypothesis that three apes hitting keys at random on typewriters for an infinite amount of time will surely produce the Shakespearean tragedy. The bulk of the short consists of the apes discussing the task that has been put upon them, humorously.

The same goes for "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread," where the composer known for his minimalist style goes to buy a loaf of bread and life begins to interrupt. "Variations on the Death of Trotsky" meditates on the intersection of politics and love, led by a near-death Leon Trotsky.

However, that intersection is played out through a set of mutating histories.

Arguably, the most wellknown short of the set is "Sure Thing." The premise is simple: A man and woman meet in a café. As the couple gets to know each other, they begin to get "do-overs" for their statements in a literal sense. Each time a bell rings the character changes his statement to a more pleasing one. By the end their statements are so perfect that they fall in love.

It's a reflection on something most people wish they could do — undo all the mistakes you commit in trying to get to know someone.

"The enjoyable part is you get to see those mistakes, which is the source of most romantic comedy in the world," Golux said. "In this sense, there's a real universe that's constructed, allows these two people to actually fall in love."

To highlight the metaphysical material, Golux has changed up the setting of the theater. Generally, productions are staged in a "proscenium" setting, where the audience members all sit facing forward, looking at the stage.

For "All in the Timing," Golux has set the audience up in an alley setting, where people sit in rows on two sides of the stage.

"Like a tennis court," Golux said. "But with no one sitting on the ends."

The different type of staging is perfect, given the metaphysical content of the play.

"Not only are you watching the action, you're watching other people watch the action," Golux said.

The crew also based their set design on Dutch artist Piet Mondrian, an early 20th-century artist known for his non-representational forms — white backgrounds with thick black lines and solid squares of primary colors.

"We're using that design aesthetic to speak about the idea that these philosophical ideas are atomic ideas," Golux said.

"That they are built up together to create a rich fabric of human experience."

"All in the Timing" contains mature language but only for comedic effect. The most adult theme is that "people fall in love," Golux said.

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Photo by Kade Mendelowitz
Heather Warren ,left, and Andrew Cassel are shown in a scene from "The Philadelphia," one of six shorts in Theatre UAF's production of "All in the Timing," directed by Stephan Golux