

'Rent': A musical for all

Lisa McChristian
The Pendulum

I had the privilege of seeing one of the best American musicals of our generation, "Rent." The award-winning musical by Jonathan Larson covers everything from sex, drugs, rock n' roll, homosexuality vs. heterosexuality, poverty, true love, friendship, life and even death.

move forward in their lives when all the mistakes in their past come back to haunt them. Furthermore, the song "La Vie Boheme" encompasses our generation with a thought provoking tune about young adults fighting for acceptance and acknowledgment from the world.

One of the most touching things about "Rent" is the show's touching love stories between Roger and Mimi Marquez and Tom Collins and Angel Shunard. Tom Collins is an HIV positive computer genius who is mugged on the street and rescued by Angel, a transvestite street drummer.

Collins and Angel make the entire audience laugh out loud with the dance mix song "Today 4 U" and made the entire audience weep with the song "I'll Cover You." Angel is a character of love and generosity who was claimed too young by the deadly disease that is taking too many lives.

Mimi is an HIV positive dancer who meets Roger when looking for a heating source to fix her heroin. Roger is afraid to commit and confesses his love to Mimi because he saw his girlfriend April die and does not want to see AIDS claim Mimi as well.

Something that makes the show even more touching is the story behind the show's creator. The 35-year-old Larson died before "Rent's" opening night. One of Jonathan's old girlfriends found an old letter by Jonathan saying "When I die... whenever or wherever that maybe, I wish to be cremated, and I want my ashes to be thrown to the sunset with music and dancing and crying."

So, if you get an opportunity in December to see the show in Greensboro, I would definitely recommend it. You don't even have to be a theater lover to have one of the best nights of your life.



The show is based on the concept of the classic opera "La Boheme."

I saw the Angel Touring Company, which is one of the two "Rent" casts that travel to major cities in the United States. The other cast is the Benny Tour cast. This cast will perform the musical at the Greensboro Coliseum from Dec. 16- Dec. 20.

"Rent" follows the lives of roommates and best friends Roger Davis and Mark Cohen. Roger is a struggling musician whose only wish is to write one great song before he dies of AIDS. Mark is a filmmaker whose drama queen girlfriend dumped him for a female lawyer.

Mark and Roger face homelessness when their old roommate Benny threatens to evict them from their building. Benny married a wealthy woman and left his friends behind.

What follows is the show's first major song titled "Rent," where the entire cast is introduced and gets the audience pumped with a pure rock song questioning how they can pay rent when they cannot even pay for heat and how can they

Poet promotes, represents literary works at Elon

Johannah Lawrence
The Pendulum

On Wednesday, Oct. 28, Yeager Recital Hall was filled with students who came to hear the works of poet Michael Chitwood.

Chitwood, who is originally from Roanoke, Va., is a freelance journalist. His work regularly appears in a number of North Carolina newspapers. Additionally, he is also the author of two poetry books; "Salt Works" and "Whet."

Chitwood's latest works include "The Weave Room" and "Hitting Below The Bible Belt." "The Weave Room" is a book of poems that depict the life of a textile mill throughout a decisive social and human movement. Chitwood's aspiration for the book was fueled by his own experience working a maintenance job in Rocky Mount, Va., weave plant. Working in the plant gave Chitwood an opportunity to observe and record the lives of those who worked in the looms.

Chitwood's poems are narrative and are written in the language and dialect of the people of Rocky Mount. He sets the setting for the mill by discussing the surrounding happenings, such as the Vietnam War. His book is interesting in that it is both serious and

amusing, tragic and jubilant.

One poem that the audience seemed to enjoy was a poem titled "American Manhood vs. American Bandstand." The poem depicts Chitwood as a young man who, as he tells the audience, was a hippie at heart, even though his father made him cut his hair every Friday night. The first stanza of this poem is as follows:

"Isn't she pretty' he'd say to the TV when the American Bandstand camera zoomed in on Herman or one of the Hermits. He'd just be passing through the living room on the way back to the lawn or garden or car or whatever he was doing, which was always something as it was nothing for me, privileged as I was to waste a morning with the 'inintelligible screeching of sissies."

Chitwood's appearance at Elon was a great chance for students who are studying his works in various classes to hear him read and bring to life the poems with his strong southern accent. For those who did not attend or did not know about Chitwood's appearance, copies of "The Weave Room" are available in the college bookstore. You can also hear Chitwood regularly on North Carolina Public Radio.

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It's At

On Tour

- ◆ Nov. 5: Candlebox, The Ritz, Raleigh.
- ◆ Nov. 6: Widespread Panic, LJM Coliseum, Winston-Salem.
- ◆ Nov. 10: Marilyn Manson, Owens Auditorium, Charlotte.
- ◆ Nov. 17: Cherry Poppin Daddies, The Ritz, Raleigh.
- ◆ Nov. 21 & 22: Shania Twain, Dean E. Smith Center in Chapel Hill; Charlotte Coliseum.
- ◆ Nov. 22: Journey, Greensboro Coliseum.
- ◆ Nov. 28: Dave Matthews Band, Greensboro Coliseum

On Stage

- ◆ Nov. 5-8: The Department of Performing Arts presents "Children of Eden," 8 p.m. Thurs.-Sat. and 2 p.m. Sun.
- ◆ Nov. 10: Ensemble Galilei performs ancient spiritual music, McCrary, 8 p.m. Free with Elon ID, \$10 without.
- ◆ Nov. 14: The Elon Chamber Singers, Whitley, 7 p.m. Free.

On Screen

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