

Breathing fresh air into classic literature

'Pride and Prejudice' amuses, entertains modern audience

Ashley Fahey
Copy Chief

The stage had transformed into 1813 Hertfordshire, complete with bonneted women, lilting English dialects and male servants donning high heels. It was as though a scene had been lifted straight out of Jane Austen's most famous novel. But in reality, Elon University's Department of Performing Arts had constructed a theatrical interpretation of Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," performed April 19-22 in McCrary Theatre.

From the dialects to the props, the production harkened well to the novel's narrative. The cast and crew insisted on being absolutely accurate on character posture, costume design and Austen's intent when she first wrote the novel almost 200 years ago. But Elon's production of "Pride and Prejudice" didn't strike as a mere copycat of the novel. It was able to become something incredible of its own.

For one, the wit and comedy found in Austen's novel was highlighted and emphasized more than most would gather from reading her text. Although one of the strengths of "Pride and Prejudice" is its humor, the actors in Elon's production truly embraced their characters and brought out an exaggeration not vividly seen when reading the book.

But in characters such as Mrs. Bennet, played by junior Claire Manship, or Mr. Collins, played by junior Carl St. Goar, the show was humorous all the way through. Manship's accurate portrayal of the often ridiculous, smothering and overwhelming Mrs. Bennet kept audiences entertained, even when she was not the forefront of the attention. Her exaggerated laughs and shouts for her husband or daughters were

everything the notorious Mrs. Bennet should be and highlighted exactly what Austen intended in her creation of Mrs. Bennet: satirizing women who thought of nothing but marrying daughters off quickly and into good names and fortunes.

St. Goar's interpretation of Mr. Collins was spot on as well. In adaptations over time, Mr. Collins' character has been treated in many different ways. He has been played as nervous, stammering and awkward, but he has also been characterized as serious and emotionless. But St. Goar breathed new life into Mr. Collins by making him quirky in a subdued, almost intractable manner. In fact, if the audience wasn't watching St. Goar's facial expressions and body language, it might have been missed. But the subtlety brought to the role made it all the more humorous and engaging, and also underscored Mr. Collins' upright, pompous manner perfectly.

Of course, the lead characters of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, played by senior Stephanie Lloyd and junior Logan T. Sutton, were well-played and brought a new appreciation for the timeless characters. Lloyd's Elizabeth was engaging and charming yet always prudent, whereas Sutton's portrayal of Darcy was aloof and solemn but eventually won over the audience. The cheers that came from the audience during the final proposal scene were a testament to how Lloyd and Sutton connected to their respective characters and made them the relatable individuals so many have loved for generations.

The set was minimalist and changed very subtly throughout the play. But the choice to remain minimalist suited Elon's production perfectly and emphasized, rather than took away from, the dialogue and actors. The costume design was superb



Junior Logan T. Sutton (left) and senior Stephanie Lloyd share a kiss as Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. SARA HUDAK | Staff Photographer

and took audiences back to early 1800s England, from the fashionable headwear donned to the traveling cloaks worn.

Elon's production of "Pride and Prejudice" was a delight for all ages and genders. While staying true to Austen's text, it also became something unique from both the novel and previous adaptations of "Pride and Prejudice." It was an evening at the theater Mr. Bingley himself would have declared "top of the hill."

MORE ONLINE

Couldn't get enough of the show? See more from the production online.

<http://pend.lu/pride>

MORGAN MAYER | Multimedia Reporter

Campus organizations use documentaries to shine light on crises

Holocaust documentary gives voice to genocide survivors

Stephanie Butzer
Senior Reporter

Holocaust Remembrance Week at Elon University consists of a series of events that commemorate the Holocaust in order to remember its victims. Hillel and Amnesty International co-sponsored a screening of "The Last Survivor," a feature-length documentary shown April 18 as part of the week's events.

The award-winning documentary follows the lives of four people as they describe what it was like to live through four different genocides: Rwanda, Darfur, the Congo and the Holocaust.

The documentary focused on four survivors, one from each tragedy. Each individual had a story of survival that highlighted the importance for populations worldwide of understanding what is happening in other countries. It also gave those survivors a voice, unlike so many others before them, according to junior Rachel Stanley, co-president of Hillel.

"I love this film because it shows the humanity of these four amazing survivors while reminding the viewer that we can never forget the horrors of genocide and that genocide will continue to occur if we do," Stanley said.

Stanley saw "The Last Survivor" at a conference on genocide in the fall, and she said she felt it was important to bring the film to Elon's campus.

"The people featured in the film have such amazing true stories," Stanley said. "I wanted the Elon community to be able to hear them."

Elon has many organizations that are interested in the Holocaust, African studies and migration issues, but Stanley said it is important to host even more events around campus to increase

awareness of worldwide issues.

The documentary was filmed in four different countries — Rwanda, Darfur, Germany and the Congo. Some of the survivors have not reconnected with any family members or know whether they're even alive. The producers followed these people as they embarked on different milestones, such as living in their first apartment or traveling to high schools to share their experiences.

During the film, Heidi Fried, a survivor of the Holocaust, said God sees all human beings as small creatures, crossing borders and constantly moving. She said she doesn't understand why other cultures don't embrace one another, considering how often they intersect.

Also during the film, audiences meet a woman named Jacqueline lived through Rwanda's genocide. She spoke to the United Nations about her experience. She had seen her neighbors — who had been friendly to her family since she was a child — butcher and throw the remains of her relatives into a river. She said she strives to make these deaths, among the millions of others, known to the world.

According to Stanley, "The Last Survivor" aims to use its four subjects as leaders in a movement against genocide. By revealing their struggles and loss, it humanizes them not only as survivors, but as people. Through the film, Stanley said she hopes Elon students were exposed to crises occurring around the world, as well as how people can work collectively to combat similar issues that continue today.

"It is up to us — to every single person — to bear witness to what happens, to hear these stories," Stanley said.

'Kony 2012: Part II' answers critics, loses points for style

Lindsay Kimble
Senior Reporter

For a film that has wrought so much controversy, Invisible Children's "Kony 2012" documentary has a lot of heart. Exploring Joseph Kony, head of the Lord's Resistance Army, a Ugandan guerrilla group, and one of the world's worst living war criminals, "Kony 2012" aims to "make Kony famous" and is fairly confident it can do so.

The film, which became the most viral video in Internet history after debuting in March, has sparked criticism and complaints. Media brought to light the expenditures of Invisible Children, the nonprofit organization crusading against Kony. Others complained the activists involved barely skimmed the surface of the issue in the short documentary.

To answer the media buzz and numerous critiques, Invisible Children released "Kony 2012: Part II — Beyond Famous." This second documentary, which has been making headlines itself, was shown by Invisible Children roadies Monday night in Elon University's LaRose Digital Theatre.

Much like its predecessor, "Part II" leaves quite the impact. Pairing beautiful video footage with terrific graphics, the video seeks to answer questions left by "Kony 2012." But what it lacks is the emotional pull of the original documentary.

Opening with clips ripped straight from newscasts, it is clear from the start of "Part II" that its aim is to address criticism, while providing a more in-depth look at the LRA, Kony's militant group that turns children into soldiers.

But the documentary, while touching and well-executed, does not seem to have the same viral impact as its predecessor. Shorter and slightly more in-depth than the simplified original, the glamorized

storytelling of the first film is still there — but muted.

The question is, then, is the film made this way to adhere to critics' complaints?

"In our day and age, you have to simplify everything for people to get involved," said junior Leah Randall, who attended the screening. "If you were to just say, 'There are kids that have guns and are killing people,' people get it, but if you get more in-depth in this kind of format, people lose interest and don't care."

An intriguing difference between the two Kony films is the presence — or absence — of Invisible Children co-founder Jason Russell, who narrated the first film and was present throughout most of it.

The second film is not narrated by Russell, and he is only mentioned once. This likely stems from his arrest and hospitalization a few weeks after the original documentary became an Internet sensation. Russell was seen walking the streets of San Diego naked, yelling and slapping the pavement. While Invisible Children said Russell is in rehabilitation, his return to the organization is still several months away, as evidenced by his absence from the documentary.

"I think it's cool that they didn't ignore the negative things," Randall said. "They aren't hiding it like some organizations would."

Freshman Lauren Berk, who serves as secretary of Elon's Invisible Children chapter, said she sees "Part II" as the perfect way to reach out to critics.

"I really encourage people who are critical of Invisible Children to watch 'Kony 2012: Part II' and Invisible Children's other films," Berk said.

Berk said she feels the video and its viral predecessor help speak for a generation that "cares about something bigger" than itself.