

Shakespeare Co. deserves encore

Kate Gibney
Staff Writer

The Poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration...But because human judgement, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible; and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion it is proper to inquire, by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favor of his countrymen.

-Samuel Johnson,
"Preface to the Plays of
William Shakespeare"

I think it would be fair to say that Shakespeare's "ancient dignity" emerged from last Tuesday evening's performance by the Reduced Shakespeare Company slightly smarting. But his claim to fame for yet another generation is more secure than ever.

Shakespeare. Say it just once in an English class and you can hear the groan echoing piteously from certain corners. Even amongst supposed devotees of literary art, there are those who just cannot seem to develop a taste for the man's work. They will be willing

to grant that he is one of the greatest poets of the English language but, that accolade aside, still find themselves hard put to answer the question: why read him?

At this point, I think that it is only fair in the interests of honesty to note that I am one of those people who does anything but groan when she sees Shakespeare on the syllabus; the horrible truth of the matter is I love the way the man writes. And even more horrible than that, I happen to think that everyone should read Shakespeare just once—for the experience.

But that is not a rationale that appeals to the inveterate groaners in the corners of the room nor to those people who eschewed the pain and pleasure of digesting great literature for a degree and became something other than English majors. It is not an answer that really appeals to anyone with a block against the bard. But a single performance of the Reduced Shakespeare Company just might be.

For one thing, the trio of Reed Martin, Austin Tichenor, and Matt Croke is absolutely hysterical. Most of us never thought that either "Romeo and Juliet" or "Hamlet" could be so funny; I know for a fact that I never imagined Ophelia's id speaking just the way it did that night. But aside from all

their antics, in the gaps between the laughter and pointed social commentary, the Reduced Shakespeare Company gave the audience a glimpse of the poet. A full house that mere seconds before was in hysterics fell silent at the sounds of Shakespeare's words: "What a piece of work is man...All the rest is silence."

It is all a trick. First, they dazzle and amuse you with fantastically camp, sarcastic skits, and then just when your senses are lulled into the belief that you have found the ultimate alternative to the Royal Shakespeare Company, it happens. Even confirmed groaners find themselves listening to a brief excerpt of semi-serious Shakespeare. Just a moment, of course; the men up there are careful not to lose their audience. But that moment is enough.

It is enough because you leave the theater feeling somehow that if they could find all that in Shakespeare, there must be something there. What stand revealed are the "peculiarities of excellence" which continue to assure Shakespeare's work a place in men's favor despite the changing current of time and taste.

When you get right down to it, however trite but true, Shakespeare still has the capacity to make one laugh as well as think in the space of a single evening. As successful communicators of that, Martin, Tichenor and Croke deserve an encore and, managing to update the bard with enough hilarity to entertain the confirmed non-Shakespearian, definitely a second night's engagement.

Restaurant Review

• Rearn Thai •

Laura Davis
Staff Writer

Located next to West Market Street One Stop (cold beverages), Rearn Thai is a divine little hole-in-the-wall Thai restaurant run by "actual Thai people" (quoth my friend Rachel).

Rach and I stumbled upon this place after discovering that the Exchange, the restaurant I was supposed to review, did not serve dinner on Sundays.

A few random first impressions—this place smells absolutely WONDERFUL! Not only does it smell good, it's completely wheelchair accessible—door handles that extend down low, wide doors to the large bathrooms (which had REAL Dial soap and not that icky pink stuff), and tables with plenty of room.

Aside from the standard bamboo roll-down curtains and odd thingy hanging from the ceiling that's remotely Asian, little in the decor of checkerboard floor and generic table would suggest this is an Asian restaurant. But the waitstaff is nice and despite the fact the room is somewhat crowded with seven tables, it's not too noisy.

On to the food. Prices range from \$1.50 for soup to \$10.95 for a fish special. The majority of the entrees were between 5 and 7 dollars, and this place has THAI ICED COFFEE!!!! In case you haven't ever had it, Thai Iced Coffee is coffee, brewed very strong and pretty sweet, served black with cream floating on top that you stir in

with your straw.

Short of taking caffeine intravenously, this is the best, and most pleasant way to wake up and enjoy your meal. Needless to say, I ordered it. Rachel ordered hot tea which she described as a "very nice tea" and absolutely yummy.

I was not crazy about the Rice Noodles with Chicken I ordered. I always forget rice noodles have a texture I can't quite get used to. The dish was not as spicy as I would have like, and it had egg in it. I understand putting egg in fried rice, but it didn't really compliment the chicken.

Rachel, on the other hand, was absolutely orgasmic over her Vegetables Deluxe and Vegetable Fried rice. A Warning to vegans—the fried rice also had egg in it—you might want to ask specifically about each dish.

Upon hearing of my trek to Rearn Thai, Nat Gray went on an extended tangent about how good the bean curd was, almost insisting that I mention it. So that's another option for veg-heads and those who just don't feel like having meat.

I didn't note the existence of a beer or wine list, but I'd assume they would have at least one brand of domestic, and maybe a Thai beer (according to my dad, Thai beer is pretty good).

By the time Rachel and I left, the restaurant was almost full (to its 28-person capacity), so I think this place will be around for a while. Until next time, enjoy the caf and remember—tip big.

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