

Two plays, one purpose:

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Junior Alicia Johnson performs "Darfur Monologue"

Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen performs "The Closet"



For those unaware, "The Vagina Monologues" is a play, not a lesson in anatomy.

Moreover, it is not for the faint of heart. Yes, "The Vagina Monologues" are raw, deeply sad at times, and real. But, they are also bursting with a deeply gratifying humor that is relatable for both men and women.

From Feb. 29 through March 1, Guilford College produced a duo of inspiring plays performed by Guilford students and faculty; "The Vagina Monologues" and "A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant, and a Prayer."

In Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues," vaginas serve as the common thread that binds each unique tale.

Streams of monologues unfold that reveal tales of women of all ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities. Yet, these seemingly unrelated women share the desire to recount events within their lives about sex, violence, women's rights, and, of course, their vaginas.

Each monologue acts as an adaptation of real questions posed by Ensler to a range of women from the tender age of seven to the wise age of seventy.

Questions like "what would your vagina wear" and "what would your vagina say" are posed, then answered with immensely entertaining and playful responses.

If ever freedom of expression existed, it was certainly in Ensler's personification of the vagina.

Angry vaginas, shy vaginas, and horny vaginas are only a few of the many presented in "The Vagina Monologues."

Two of the most memorable acts included one in which a feminist curses the inherent evils of thong underwear and feminine hygiene, and another where a lawyer-turned-dominatrix-sex-worker explains how she delights in giving other women pleasure.

"The performances were incredibly well done," said first-year Adrienne Sibrizzi. "There was a clever balance of wit, humor, and pure honesty."

However, while many of these monologues are certainly entertaining, others speak of the violence, mutilation, and rape of women. In fact, an entirely new set of monologues were compiled to form "A Memory, a Monologue, a Rant, and a

"THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES" AND "A MEMORY, A MONOLOGUE, A RANT, AND A PRAYER" WORK TO EMPOWER THROUGH AWARENESS

Prayer" (MMRP), which specifically deals with issues of violence against women.

MMRP was another assemblage of monologues that, while related to "The Vagina Monologues," was performed on separate evenings.

What is most noteworthy about this set of monologues is the fact that the actors were both men and women.

"I feel like the most important issue to take away from these pieces is that eliminating violence against women is a concern for everyone, not just women or men," said co-director Caroline Floyd. "That is why the MMRP production is imperative; it brings in the male aspect of these issues and this needs to be addressed."

Unlike the "Vagina Monologues," MMRP's scenes are explicitly performed to illustrate varying depictions of emotional or physical violence against women.

For instance, while one monologue deals with the sex life of a married couple, another depicts the story of a young refugee girl who was sexually abused by a group of soldiers.

Because both plays deal with violence against women, the two directors, Caroline Floyd and Clare Gillen, decided to play their own role to proliferate awareness of the reality of this truth.

After each showing, a series of talk backs were hosted by the two directors and cast to answer questions, lead discussions, or simply reflect on the performances.

"Every year we talk to a new person, reach a new person," said Floyd. "The point of the show is to raise awareness and often times this awareness is heightened by individual experiences shared during the talk backs."

Over \$1,000 was raised through these performances to aid in the campaign to eliminate violence against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A refreshing range of students and faculty were involved in both productions, including Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen.

"The Vagina Monologues show is an empowering experience for both women and men as it explicitly celebrates and highlights so much of the acute and heartfelt issues surrounding women and violence against women so vibrant in our culture today," said Mortensen.

Junior Casey Thomas performs "Respect"



"What would your vagina say?"

Junior Lucas Campbell performs "The Destruction Artist"



The cast of MMRP takes a bow after their final performance on Sun., March 1, in Bryan Jr. Auditorium. The show ran for two nights in conjunction with "The Vagina Monologues."