

The Cherry Orchard

The sorrowful play The Cherry Orchard was recently performed at the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater. The donors from the Milwaukee Rep granted me the opportunity of seeing this play on Wednesday, April 29th. This play set an example of the economic and dramatic struggles we all face today.

Madame Ranyevskaya (Deborah Staples) escaped her tragic life by fleeing to Paris, leaving her family behind in Russia. When her house in Russia was being foreclosed, Anya (Lee Stark), Madame Ranyevskaya's daughter, went to Paris to bring her mother back to their home in Russia. The joy of coming back to Russia was thrilling to Madame Ranyevskaya, especially seeing her childish older brother, Leonid Gayev (Torrey Hanson) and her adopted daughter, Varya (Erin Neal). It was joyful for Madame Ranyevskaya to reunite with her family again, but it brought back the tragic memories that had made her leave her home in Russia.

The cherry orchard surrounding their house was symbolic of a new start. The cherry orchard did not have any significance to the youngsters, but it had a significant impact for the elders, especially Madame Ranyevskaya, Gayev, and Firs (Richard Halverson), an elderly manservant. Firs' plan was to pick the cherries, make them into jams and sell them to make money. With the unexpected plan, the story was left with mysterious emotion in each character.

The play was performed on a thrust stage. The director used many props to change scenes. Though reading the play was confusing, the actual play made me understand the play very well. The director made each scene noticeable by adding or

subtracting props and rearranging them. By knowing the time and the day, shades were added. There were sound effects that separated the outdoors from the indoors. The different costumes signified different events occurring during the play.

Each actor performed very well, except for Erin Neal, who played Varya. Her exaggerated performance made me feel too annoyed.

I would bring my friends and family to see this play because the struggles that Madame Ranyevskaya went through have some sort of connections to our lives. Madame Ranyevskaya went through a lot, from the death of her husband and son to losing her home. Her positive role model toward everyone will encourage us to become more like her.