

Sophia Rizzo

Theater Arts

### The Government Inspector Review

The production we went to see was entitled *The Government Inspector*, which was mounted by the Milwaukee Repertory Theater on Wednesday, September 30, 2009. As well as being extremely funny, this production had a way of connecting with the audience. While still talking and conversing with the other characters in the play, the actors were able to make the audience feel as though they were a part of the action. All of the aspects of the production such as costume design, the set design, the music and, last but not least, the actors integrated extremely well to create a tremendously enjoyable production.

*The Government Inspector* is about a very devious man named Ivan Hlestakov, played by Gerard Neugent, who takes full advantage of a confused town. Hlestakov comes into town with his servant, Osip, played by Torrey Hanson, and stirs up quite a bit of trouble. The town hears news that a government inspector is coming to examine the town. Since Hlestakov is the newcomer in town, everyone assumes he is the inspector, and they do everything in their power to impress him. The whole town is thrown into chaos as everyone tries to bring everything up to standard, which means that the tiny hospital was changed into a children's hospital and the geese had to be driven out of the courthouse's jury box. However, making the town look good was not the only way the town intended to sway Hlestakov; there were also plenty of bribes to be made. Throughout the play everyone from the mayor to the postmaster bribes Hlestakov so he will grow fond of the town. Although Hlestakov quickly realizes he is not who the townspeople think he is, he takes advantage of the people's generosity not only with money, housing, and material goods, but also with women. The whole production is based on a misunderstanding and is very facetious in the way it pokes fun at such serious matters as bribery, education, tyranny, and serfdom.

The Milwaukee Repertory Theater did an amazing job with the artistic aspect of the production. First of all, the costumes were outstanding. It was very impressive how a simple costume adjustment could make a character's personality totally change. An example of this was the innkeeper's wife/Grusha/corporal's widow, played by Laura Gordon. A simple adjustment of her "hump" made for a very entertaining and obvious change of character. Some other costume designs displayed a character's personality before the actor even started talking. For example, the costume worn by Deborah Staples as Anna Andreyevna was very flamboyant, as well as a little racy, and right off the bat one could tell that her character was going to stir up some drama. Overall the "behind the scenes" aspect of the production added to our entertainment of the show.

My favorite part of the play was one specific scene. When the townspeople were trying to find out information from Hlestakov, they ended up serving him glass after glass of their famous wine. Needless to say, the result made for an absolutely hilarious monologue. One line that was particularly funny was when Hlestakov uttered, "You stupid faceless masses! Why don't you have any faces? Are you stupid?" This line was very funny and Neugent's acting made the scene effortless and very real. He actually

seemed like he was in a drunken stupor and I could not keep myself from laughing until I cried.

This play really was not unsatisfying at all. I thought everything was very successful from the acting right down to the costume design. It is kind of a confusing story to follow just because it's meant to be that way. However, the change of time and place was very clear in this production, which made the plot easier to follow.

I would definitely encourage friends and family to see this production. In these tough economic times, it's wonderful to have a comedy around to see and enjoy and take one's mind off hardships for a while. Besides, this comedy is particularly great in the way its story makes everyone feel like they aren't as messed up as they thought they were. This production was very entertaining, the actors were very talented, and it was just well worth the while to attend.