

Inside Schreiber

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12 Angry Men & Women Judged Superb

by D.F. Mulvihill

Every year people wonder how the Performing Arts Department will survive after "this year's seniors" graduate. During this school year we have been surprised with two wonderful productions, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *12 Angry Men and Women*. Not only did each utilize the talents of this year's performance seniors, but it prepared others for future plans.

In the story of *12 Angry Men and Women*, twelve jurors are given the task of deciding if a boy is guilty of killing his father. All of the jurors are ready to send him to his death, except for one, Juror #8 (Heather Osterman). Because of her "reasonable doubt," she cannot vote guilty. She gradually persuades each juror to change his vote to not guilty. The play recounts the flaming tempers, exposed prejudices, and building hatred which develops as the jury deliberates.

The performances were held on Thursday March 2, Friday March 3, and on the afternoon of Sunday, March 5. The play was held in the round, a concept where both the audience and the cast are on the stage, providing a more intimate atmosphere. On Thursday night the cast went through some first-night jitters, such as forgetting and stumbling lines, but midway through the first act they had pulled everything together, and what they had pulled together was a fine performance which lasted for the entire night.

On Friday, the cast again put together a fine performance. Having put aside most of their nervousness, the cast was able to convincingly show the great bitterness developing between them. The vital anger was kept alive, although the second act did not run as smoothly as the first due to occasional slip-ups by the cast and lighting crew. However, the Friday night performance was perhaps their best. After being off Saturday (due to Sports Night), the cast's essential anger was long gone, resulting in a dull performance. They started off sluggish and never really got rolling. Trip-

ping on lines, along with missing them, was common on the part of the cast throughout the first act, though the cast improved slightly in the second act. By Sunday afternoon, the cast seemed bored with the play.

The strong lead of Juror #8 was played wonderfully by Heather Osterman. Heather, in her first starring role on the Schreiber stage, portrayed the great courage needed for her character to stand alone and the great reasoning used to persuade the other jurors. These traits are essential for this character. Heather started out confident and remained that way throughout all of the performances. She did an excellent job of making her role convincing to the audience as well as to the cast. This character, formerly portrayed by Bob Cummings and the great Henry Fonda, is one of the best ever, and Heather did the role justice.

Ronit Feinglass, in her first Schreiber production, stole the show with her "superbitch" character. Ronit's character uses her prejudices against kids, formed by her own mishandling of her son, as the sole reason for voting guilty. In the dramatic climax, Ronit realizes her discrimination, breaks down, and gives in to the "not guilty" turn around. Ronit was a witch from start to finish, never slipping out of character. Although she was quite loud, often decalifying the spines of the spectators in the front row, Ronit did an incredible job of adapting a difficult role to her own abilities.

Another newcomer to the school's theater who had a major role in *12 Angry Men and Women* was Brian Ullman. In his first speaking role, Brian portrayed the bigoted juror who votes guilty because the boy is from the slums and is "one of them." His short temper flares throughout the play. He, too, realizes his prejudice in a dramatic scene in which all of the jurors walk away from him in disgust. Brian was quite convincing, maintaining character throughout the play, and he is a potential star of future Schreiber productions.



Sean Cronin, Ronit Feinglass, and Dan Chehebar:
3 members of the ensemble cast in *12 Angry Men and Women*.

Gina Farasaciano, after a do-nothing part in *Little Shop of Horrors*, did a fine job as the intellectual juror. She provided great arguments against the accused and was quite professional throughout the play.

Dan Chehebar played a brash, antsy juror. Although he was very good, inserting some humor into this very serious drama, it was apparent that Dan did not have to dig deep into his acting talents for this production.

Matt Marcus, after the lead in *Little Shop of Horrors*, had the lackluster role of the Foreman. Matt didn't have the chance to shine and also seemed quite stiff on stage.

Two more brilliant spots of the three performances were the in-depth portrayals by Diana

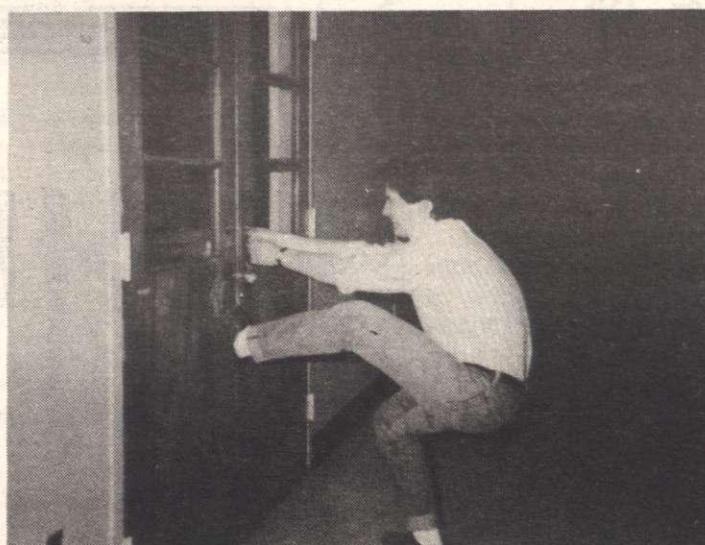
Shafter and Sondra Youdelman. Diana, as an old woman, created a kind, caring, and thoughtful character. Diana's role developed into the jury's consciousness and was most believable. The performance was outstanding. Sondy, using a brilliant eastern-European accent, showed her great acting ability as a pitiful immigrant. She constantly remained in character and provided a great contrast to the jury. After two great performances in *Little Shop and 12 Angry Men & Women*, Sondy has proven that she is one of Schreiber's best actors.

Among the rest of the cast were many interesting, though small, performances. Linda Janow did an above par job, considering she had a relatively short amount of time to prepare

for the role (Linda was a last minute replacement for Juror #6). Terri Patterson and Christine Schendel-Smith both did fine jobs with their small parts. Christine's part, as the ditzy woman, provided a few laughs and was quite pleasant. Sean Cronin, the man from the slums, was good in his confrontations with Brian Ullman, but seemed to drift out of character when he was not speaking. This is probably due to his lack of experience on the stage. Finally, Dave Hawthorne, in his role as the guard, maintained the atmosphere of the play and engendered a few laughs with his side comments.

Director/co-producer Jeff Roberts must be commended for churning out yet another fine production. Unfortunately, Mr. Roberts enjoys adding corny, patriotic pranks at the end of plays, as he did with the American flag and "My Country 'Tis of Thee" bit at the end of this one.

The criticism that the Performing Arts Department received for producing this drama only five years after the last production was unwarranted. This is a fantastic production, one that allows actors to expand their talents. It is a play that should be done by every generation of Schreiber students so that they can have the chance to experience it. This generation had the chance and took advantage of it.



Brian Stein can't get into the cafeteria these days.

Photo of the Month

...from the
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