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A Cordial ‘Campus Cabaret’

Leila Bunker, News Editor

The lights were low and the performers looked dapper as they sat around tables with drinks in hand. The evening was complimented with a gentle ambience. Seattle University’s theater department presented “A Campus Cabaret” to celebrate the themes of light, laughter and levity. The goal of the show was to highlight the universal experience of coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic as we assume what is left of normalcy, emphasizing renewed connections to create a stronger community.

Cast members showcased a breadth of abilities as the show was a fusion of comedy, poetry, acting and song. This combination of artistic elements allowed the audience to be inspired by the performances individually.

Van Roeder, a second-year pre-major student, felt fulfilled by being a part of the production.

“One of my favorite parts about putting it together was that we each got complete creative control over what we wanted to do, which I find to be really beneficial as an artist,” Roeder said.

Roeder sang an acoustic version of “I’d Rather Go Blind” by Etta James with castmate Alex Chavez, a fourth-year theater and arts leadership double major, on guitar. He also sang “Feeling Good” by Nina Simone for the finale.

A number of cast members were either completely new to theater or partaking in an on-campus production for the first time. Laura Nicely, a third-year sociology and theater double major, felt excited about the range of people involved in the show.

“I love that this is one of the first shows where we’ve had a large number of non-theater majors involved. It’s really cool and it’s nice to be able to meet all of these other people that I wouldn’t typically meet while also giving them a chance to showcase their talents in a way that they wouldn’t usually,” Nicely said.

Nicely played a clown in the cabaret alongside Jaden Lindsey, a second-year creative writing major. It was Nicely’s first time acting as a clown which was both nerve wracking and exciting. She enjoyed watching how the production evolved by incorporating a story-like element rather than it feeling like a talent show.

For Frankie Pinuela, a second-year nursing major, it was a first to be partaking in any theater production. She’s played guitar and sang for seven years, and now she’s found a way to showcase those talents to an audience.

“It has been amazing and tiring, but it is such a beautiful contrast between what I do as a nursing major and being able to express my other passions. It feels like it’s [being] taken so seriously and the show allowed me to feel what it’s like to do something completely out of love,” Pinuela said.



Sean Campbell

Laura Nicely (center) alongside Jaden Lindsey (right) as clowns.

Pinuela feels extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the theater department; it has been an engaging and fulfilling experience for her. She has come to adore her cast members and loved watching everyone improve in the rehearsals leading up to the performance itself.

With the cast and mentors prioritizing creative control in the production, Roeder felt the goal of the show was successfully executed.

“I think we hear the theme of light, laughter and levity and [that] would make [someone] automatically think, ‘Oh it’s just going to be happy acts and songs.’ But, I think we kind of tell the story of finding light, laughter and levity in a real way,” Roeder said. “It’s not just all happiness throughout the whole show. I think it tells our stories of coming out of the pandemic and each of our individual relationships with that.”



Caleb Ohryn performing original poetry. /Sean Campbell