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# “The Park” Showcases The Kind of Community Seattle Public Theater Creates

Xol Holigores, Volunteer Reporter

Playbills in hand, the crowd is filled with chatter as they find their seats. We peruse the cast list, director’s notes and sponsored adverts. The seats are intimately close, the furthest only a few rows away, the closest mere inches from the stage. Though all strangers, we have come together for the same reason: to see a production of love, community and hope.

“The Park” is the latest collaboration between Seattle Public Theater and Macha Theatre Works, showing from Oct. 11 to Nov. 3. It follows the story of two best friends, Livvy (Jenn Ruzumna) and Bev (Lisa Every), along with an intermingled story of countless other lives. Starring the playwrights themselves, the rest of the cast, crew and theater staff created a lively and welcoming environment for their patrons.



Carlo Deniega

A powerful portrayal of the complexities of love and grief brought tears to many audience members.

This 90-minute narrative has been a masterpiece in the making since 2020. The effort shows through the interactions between man to dog, mother to daughter, person to person and actor to audience. Many times the audience would be drawn in to participate in the entertainment, adding to the theater’s cozy ambiance.

This community is one of the fundamentals of “The Park” and of live theater, allowing people of varying perspectives and backgrounds to create a new wondrous take on a living piece of art.

The driving factor of the in-person audience is what separates live theater from digital mediums such as films or television shows. Seattle Public Theater’s director of communications, Nick Bringham, emphasized this in relation to “The Park.”

“Live theater was something that allowed us to experience something and transport us different places,” Bringham stated. “There’s really interesting and beautiful elements about being in live theater that shows us and reminds us that there is a community.”

“You come to participate because an audience with the actors is what makes the show,” Production Assistant Cordelia Carranza-Cullogh added. “You come to be a part of something and to feed off the energy of the other audience members and the actors. You can’t get that from a screen.”

With the characters from “The Park,” I have looked into the lives of a mother, a husband, an advocate for the earth, an outcast and an unconventional idol. Together in a crowd of strangers, the audience is seen in these anthologies of the human experience.

“The Park” outlines the importance of people coming together and sharing moments, while public theater creates a space for individuals to do so.

Theater, performance, art, is for everyone, and the Seattle Public Theater emphasizes this through its ticket pricing. Their tickets are always available for \$10, with higher tiers as an optional way to support the theater. For those aged 13-19, the theater hosts teen nights, offering a pizza dinner at Zeek’s and \$5 tickets. This accessibility allows the theater to develop a dedicated community surrounding its performances.

“I think that artists need to make art or they are not going to be happy,” Director Amy Poisson stated. “And I think there’s so much stress and anxiety in younger generations and I think we’re really pushing them to get the job and make their money.”

Poisson and the rest of “The Park’s” creative team prove it is possible to stay afloat in the artistic industry. There is a community to be found in theater, and the pursuit of it should be encouraged as a viable option among today’s youth.

Highlighting the importance of cycles, connection, and the struggles we all go through, “The Park” connects us all in one place, under one tree, on one bench.