Players produce another winner

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Almost everything that can go wrong in a play goes wrong somewhere in "A Man For All Seasons." It is an intellectual play, but through some kind of magic it turns the most important questions of human existence (such as the relationship between God and man) into melodrama and cliches; and, even worse, the central character manages to be so noble that he is practically petty.

Yet, for all this, it has great dramatic effectiveness; it almost never dull, and it commits even the most sickening blunders (Thomas' final farewell) in the grand manner, without the least hint of embarrassment on the part of the playwright.

Praises Staging

The Rice Players generally seem to do best in this type of strong and unsubtle drama, and they have triumphed here again. The best thing about this production was Neil Havens' direction, which was austere and imaginative; the lighting and the scene transitions were among the most original I have seen at Rice. Ed Cragg's stark set design was nearly faultless, complementing well Mr. Havens' interpretation.

Most of the acting was excellent, considering. Tom Davis did the best job, by far, in the role of the Common Man, the most difficult and interesting character in the play; he had to be fawning, rebellious, vulgar, repulsive, inexorable, frivolous, and didactic.

Davis could portray all these qualities well, and he slipped from one emotion to another instantaneously and with a fine sense of comedy.

Corrupt Casting

From a dramatic view, the best parts of the play were the Cromwell scenes. Cromwell is the arch-villain type, played to the ironic hilt by Chuck Marstand. Cromwell's "motiveless malignancy" is marvelous to behold, but there is absolutely nothing inside of him except colossal corruption — the same, however, could be said about Shakespeare's Iago.

As for the minor characters: John Harris was outstanding as Wolsey, not so much by acting, but just by standing on the stage and exuding personality; John Epstein acted well, but he was thumpingly and irrevocably miscast as Henry VIII; Jenny Baird sounded extremely gruff playing Lady More, especially when she was supposed to; Bob Lowensteins seemed rather innocent for the part of Richard Rich, but pronounced all his lines clearly; and Bob Scully did well as the Duke of Norfolk — a hearty character, and not too bright.

Sentimental Sir

This leaves only Sir Thomas More himself to be considered. Bill Seward coped, but the part is almost impossible; the playwright seems to have intended More's constant clinging to medieval dogmatism to be the result of an exalted and perhaps

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