



The High School View

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Violence erupts on stage

BY JASON GRUNER

Several regional high school students won Excellence in Acting Awards from the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild (METG) last Saturday. The accolades were presented following the organization's preliminary festival round held at Attleboro High School. Senior Taylor McNeely and junior Sam Permar both won awards for Excellence in Acting. In addition, the entire cast of the play was honored by host school Attleboro's acting troupe with an Outstanding Concept Award for their play, "Reflections."

The play was co-written by theater teacher Kate Murray, senior Sarahrae Gruner, with contributions from students in the Theater II class. "Reflections" explores the dark and troubled life of a character named Rue, played by senior Nicole Parkhurst.

The festival competition has three levels--preliminary, semi-finals, and state finals. This year, 115 one-act plays produced by high school

students from across Massachusetts participated in the preliminary round.

"The competition was not only a friendly encounter with other schools acting programs, but also a great learning experience," said junior Sarah Dawson.

Throughout the play, Rue is constantly decoding what is real and what isn't. Her gradual descent into madness devolves into what appears to be a murderous and self-destructive spiral--although the exact the distinctions between what is real and what is not remain compellingly ambiguous. Rue, a middle-aged woman, struggles to maintain her hold on reality after her mother, Grace, dies. The months pile on during which her behavior towards her family becomes increasingly violent. More troubles occur as Rue begins to recognize, at times, that much of what she feels is the truth of her life is actually an illusion.

Rue believes that her family, especially her mother, had always favored her husband Frank, played by sophomore



PHOTO BY BRADLEY CARROLL

The cast of the original play "Reflections" convenes in its preparation room in Attleboro High School, shortly before they went on stage to perform in the METG high school theater festival March 2.

Josh Boucher, over her. Jealously radiated throughout Rue's consciousness, now that her mother has departed she feels that she will have Frank all to her herself. Her family will give her more attention and she will be happier. As the months press on, Rue's suppressed emotions only have been emboldened by her mother's death. She dishes out to her family sharp passive aggressive statements, and exhibits a general, detached state of being. Rue feels powerless and thinks that her family members act as though they are a clique operating against her.

Said sophomore and makeup designer Kayla Goldman, "It was a really great experience, regardless of the outcome. The whole cast and crew put so much time into this show, and I'm glad I got to be a part of this amazing experience again."

Josh said, "It was really difficult rehearsing along with "Secret Garden," but day after day it all started to come together and it all worked out in the end."

Whenever Rue hears something she might not like--especially regarding her mother's home--she becomes increasingly indig-

nant. When Rue's niece Aria, played by junior Sarah Parrece, talks about moving furniture in Grace's home, Rue's anger increases. As Rue's behavior isolates her more and more from her family, it also isolates her from self awareness. Meanwhile her friend Aidan, played by Sam Permar, becomes her only shelter in her mental storm since he listens to her and tries to help her heal. As Rue's jealousy of her sister Cassandra, played by junior Sarah Dawson, grows, she considers committing increasingly horrific acts of violence.

Stage manager, senior

Carl Gosselin said, "I'm so proud of the cast and all of the work they put into this show. They delivered a great performance."

While the challenges of creating a production for the festival were intense, Taylor said, "This year was great because everyone pitched in and made sure that the play was the best it could be. We didn't move on, but there was a feeling of accomplishment because we'd defeated every crisis and came out on the other side with the respect of both our peers and ourselves."

Theater teacher Betsy Hauck directed the show. **MSV**

Violinist invited to play at Symphony Hall

BY THORPE KARABEES

For the first time in almost ten years, a student from the regional high school was invited to play violin in the All-State Music Festival Orchestra at Symphony Hall in Boston. Junior Sarah Ortlip-Sommers traveled to Boston on February 7 to rehearse and play a concert on March 2. The accomplishment represents the culmination of many years' worth of practice and a musical career milestone.

The three-day long rehearsal process, which began on February 27th, was far from new to Sarah. She has participated in the Southeastern District Music Festivals since seventh grade. She at-



PHOTO BY JOSH SOMMERS

Sarah Ortlip-Sommers (top row, center) played second violin at Symphony Hall in Boston on Saturday afternoon. She was the first instrumentalist in 10 years from the regional high school to be invited by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association to play in the All-State Music Festival.

tended the Soundfest Quartet Institute, a two-week-long summer music program, for five years, and she was the concertmaster of the Cape Cod Youth Symphony Or-

chestra for two years. She also was the concertmaster of the All-Cape Orchestra for the past two years and continues to rehearse every Sunday with the Boston Youth Symphony

Orchestra's (BYSO) Repertory Orchestra, which performed the day after the All-State Music Festival's concert.

"It's definitely made me a better violinist playing with

such accomplished players and playing sophisticated music," Sarah said. "As tough as it is to spend all the time and make the effort, the experience of playing in a full symphony orchestra is worth it."

Earlier this year, Sarah was principal second violinist of the Southeast District Orchestra. A recommendation from this, given to the top half of students in each district, earns a performer a chance to audition for the All-State Festival. MVRHS students have made it to the All-State Music Festival before. Regional high graduate Sidra Dumont accomplished the feat two years ago.

"I think certainly the school string programs have contributed to Sarah's love of the violin," said her mother Michele Ortlip. "Without the support of the school program, this

would not have been possible. We are grateful to Mr. Tinus for his direction and positive reinforcement as the director of the school orchestra. The same holds for his wife, Rebecca Barca-Tinus, who has been Sarah's violin teacher for six years."

Sarah does not try out for orchestras because the music festivals are fun and quick; the festival and BYSO rehearsals can be affairs that take up most of the day and a significant deal of a young musician's time.

Although Sarah, at the moment, does not want to go into a violin career, she is thinking about minoring in music in college. "Violin is more than a hobby; it has been part of my life since I was a little kid," said Sarah. "Music is something I want to continue for the rest of my life." **MSV**

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