

Execution of Justice:

by Emily Mann: A Review

Execution of Justice was performed on March 25-29 at St. Michael's College in Colchester. According to Director Peter Harrigan, the play was picked by the Fine Arts Department for several reasons. Its ensemble format allowed the involvement of the entire cast and crew, rather than focusing on two or three lead characters. The themes of the play met the educational needs and aims of the St. Michael's community at large, with its messages about human rights and all marginalized groups, not just gays.

The production played to capacity crowds four out of five performances. The President, Dean, and Vice President of the College all attended the opening night performance and were very supportive of the performance and activities surrounding it. Harrigan visited a number of classes on classes in journalism, sociology, history and political science prior to the performance, and in several cases, professors required students to see the play and write about it. The documentary, *The Times of Harvey Milk* was shown on campus several times in conjunction with the play.

Harrigan, who graduated from St. Michael's in 1983, returned to take a position as Assistant Professor in the Fine Arts Department last fall. He feels the production, and the positive response it received is a reflection of the college's efforts to teach students how to relate to other people and learn about the world.—Deborah Lashman.

Moir

With a collection of actors and crew members that numbered more than a hundred, this multi-media theater event was quite spectacular. It is a tribute to both the director Peter Harrigan and the entire cast for the ease with which this large production worked.

I have felt in these still dark times, that the more positive the visual images that the gay/lesbian community can offer, the more hope there is of diminishing prejudice. This production, with the air of curiosity and interest that it stirred on the St. Michael's campus, as well as the surrounding community, will attest to this fact.

I attended the sold out performance on opening night. Programs handed out at the door included both the history and events leading up to the shooting of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk, and the subsequent trial of Dan White. Looking around at the very mixed crowd I was struck by the seriousness of the audience, most of them carefully reading the playnotes.

The play, written by Emily Mann, is a combination of live stage action, videos, taped voices and music. There is a video camera on stage projecting its image onto large screens throughout the performance. The creative use of lighting, stage direction and simple moving props keep this highly emotional piece working. This is theater at its best.

The entire script comes from the trial transcripts, reportage and interviews. How they weave together, echo, and dramatize is what makes this real life story art. It is also what makes a startling, powerful statement to the audience. We hear quite plainly Dan White was guilty of murder. That point was not disputed. It was because of the homophobic fever the defense stirred that Dan White was only convicted of voluntary manslaughter rather than first degree murder. After all, he was very depressed, or at least that was what his defense convinced the jury. However, once he was in prison it was decided he did not require psychiatric treatment.

Seeing some of the live footage of Harvey Milk and hearing his very prophetic words in the political will he left sent a chill through me. The courage of this man, the first to run for and win elected office as an openly gay man is apparent, as is that of Mayor Moscone's support.

The injustice that took place in that San Francisco courtroom is as obvious to us now as the present day inequalities against the gay and lesbian community. It is painful when we still have to fight for our basic rights to hold jobs, obtain housing, adopt children, or license our marriages. Strength must be found in what we have accomplished since 1978, as well as in our growing collective voice. It is a tribute to all the brave people who have come out before us that work like this can be offered in our community, even at a small Vermont college. This gives me hope. ▼

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of *Out in the Mountains* is to serve as a voice for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and our supporters in Vermont. We wish the newspaper to be a source of information, support and affirmation. We also see *OITM* as a vehicle for celebration of the goodness and diversity of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual communities.

Editorial Policy

We will consider for publication any material which broadens our understanding of our lifestyles and of each other. Views and opinions appearing in the paper do not necessarily represent those of the staff. This paper cannot and will not endorse any candidates and actions of public officials on issues of importance to lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals.

We will not publish any material which is overtly racist, sexist, anti-Semitic, ageist, classist, or homophobic.

All materials submitted must be signed so we can contact the author should we need to consider editorial revisions. However, within the pages of the newspaper, articles may appear anonymously, upon request, and strict confidentiality will be observed.

We welcome and encourage all readers to submit materials for publication and to share your comments, criticisms, and positive feelings with us. This paper is here for you. The deadline for submitting material for each issue is the 1st of the month prior to publication.

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