CRIMES OF THE HEART

OCT. 25-28 1989



Patricia Vineberg, Kristin Gauthier and Barbara Kobolak rehearsing a scene from Kanata Theatre's upcoming production of Crimes of the Heart by Beth Henley, which runs in the Earl of March Theatre this week at 8 PM, Wednesday to Saturday, Oct. 25 to 28. For ticket information, call 592-1715. Photograph by Marcus Fajrajsl.

Crimes of the Heart handled well by Kanata Theatre cast

By Amanda Gibbs

"Why did you stick your head in the oven, Babe?" "I'm having a bad day."

This is the bizarre dialogue one is confronted with in Beth Henley's wickedly funny, and bitter look at the Macgrath sisters of Hazelhurst, Mississippi—*Crimes of the Heart*.

We are not too sure about the Macgrath women. Lenny is a lonely, spinster-like character who is nursing her dying grandaddy until he finally dies. Meg is a failed singer. And as a child. She was the first to find her mother after she had hanged herself along with her cat. Babe shot her husband because "she didn't like the looks of him."

Bad genes? Perhaps. But these women seem to make sense of the surreal world they inhabit. They deal with Babe's attempted murder charge, their grandfather's stroke, and their aborted relationships with a kind of geniality, a black affability.

Men, however, constitute a nightmare world for them. Their father, who deserted their mother and drove her to suicide in a fit of loneliness, is suggested as a source of some of their troubles. They are unable to deal with the men around them, who are alien to their strange and familiar world. Meg flees from the one relationship which meant anything to her. Babe cannot force herself to laugh at her husband's jokes any longer. Lenny is scared by her sterility into abandoning a meaningful relationship.

The Kanata Theatre has staged a very competent and intelligent version of this superbly written play directed by Jim Holmes. The sisters were played by three actors really capable of portraying the complex relationships in *Crimes of the Heart*.

Kristin Gauthier was superb as Babe. She had an uncanny sense of this character and portrayed in a warm and moving way the young woman's rejection of her place in a world ordered by a frightening man.

Meg was played with much

see **Review**, p. 11

***Review**, from p. 8*

conviction by Fran Walkley, who made one feel as if there was always something else that her character could have said, but didn't. Meg was a believable, and slightly enigmatic character, played by this actress.

And Lenny Macgrath was frenetic as portrayed by Barbara Kobolak. She really was bats. Although she occasionally lost her southern drawl, Kobolak did a fine job with this part.

This production sets a strong standard for the rest of the theatre season. It was a smart and well-cast choice and hopefully the group will be able to keep the momentum up with plays in the future.

Kanata Theatre



Jack Burns and Fran Walkey rehearse a scene from Kanata Theatre's production of Crimes of the Heart. The play opens tonight at the Earl of March auditorium land runs until Saturday. For more information, call the box office at 592-1715. photo by Marcus Fajrajsl

Arts/Entertainment

Crimes of the Heart worth watching

By Aliyson Latta
Citizen correspondent

The three Magrath sisters inherited a dangerous trait from their mama.

They have a hard time handling "real bad days."

Now Babe has unleashed a scandal by shooting someone. And Lenny is facing a premature midlife crisis.

And Meg has come home from a failed singing career in Hollywood to find "Old Granddaddy" dying.

That's the blackly humorous premise that underlies the Kanata Theatre's fine performance of *Crimes of the Heart*, an outrageous Pulitzer Prize-winning comedy by Beth Henley.

Kristin Gauthier offers up the most lasting performance as the irresistibly optimistic combination of vulnerability and zaniness known as Babe.

As the neurotic Lenny who's obsessed with her "shrunken ovary," Barbara Kobolak is less polished, though she wrings humor out of her moments of apparent despair.

Fran Walkley's portrayal of Meg sometimes seems strained. However, she's able to convey the conflicting aspects of her wild but sensitive nature.

Babe's defence lawyer is played with fine comic ability by Ian Clark.

Under Jim Holmes's direction, the finely crafted script peels layer after layer from the sisters' past. Along the way, the audience discovers as much about the emotional ties that bind the three, as it does about family skeletons.

Many of their insecurities and affectations stem from confusion over their mother's bizarre death.

And their real "crimes of the heart" are denials of their true feelings: Meg's affection for Doc, Lenny's feelings for her Memphis boyfriend.

Only Babe dares to seize the moment — whether she's learning the saxophone, or shooting a gun.

As they work through the crisis, there's new understanding — and lots of laughs.

The joy may only be for a moment, as Lenny says, but those moments are what *Crimes* is all about.

Theatre review
Crimes of the Heart
Earl of March Secondary School, Kanata
Until October 28









































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