



"Just listen. That's what I want," thoughtfully states actor Max Wilson playing CB in *Dog Sees God*, a progressive, contemporary play making major forward-thinking steps at Roxy's Downtown in the Wichita theatre dramaturgy. This simple request for the audience is a difficult one to adhere to in spite of the heavy topics that are presented in the production. Themes of bullying, drugs, partying, sexuality, gun violence in schools, teen pregnancy and overall teenage carnage are some of the harsh realities these famed *Charlie Brown* characters face and must figure out how to endure.

If you do decide to attend, which I certainly recommend, you simply must have an open mind and get past the profanity to find the true heart of the show. There you will discover deeper themes of man's purpose, how to handle grief in different ways or even be able to relate to these revolting teenagers who just simply want the world to be a better place. I have to almost applaud Roxy's for taking a risk for such edgy and difficult conversations to be brought to the forefront, for then in turn we can make the world healthier for our own prosperity. Plus, I feel both Wichita actors and supporters have asked for more edgier productions to be executed and now, we are finally ready for this type of theatre. We are so lucky to have this live theatre venue.

I would hate to comment on each of the actors' characters, for I feel like it would reveal too much of the plot and revelations that are worth experiencing only in person. I will say, however, that the show is well-

acted, so there is no need to worry there. It's a difficult show to pull off but they accomplished the task. Honestly, there is not one bad actor out of the bunch, whose soul commitment is not apologizing for just being yourself. In particular, strong performances are seen from Madeleine White (CB's sister), Austin Ragusin (Matt), and Matthew Hale (Beethoven). Hale's piano skills are worth mentioning as well, playing live on stage and adding additional, wonderful layers to his acting and story. It also made the Vince Guaraldi sound cues effective in between set changes. Even Ash Lauren (Marcy) earned well-deserved, show-stopping applause for her winded spork appreciation. Again, just get past the uncomfortable teen talk and controversial issues and watch and listen in order to spot these delightfully talented performances.

Costumes were selected carefully by Dora Arbuckle, an established seamstress at Roxy's. The outfits made a defining statement as to who and what the actors were portraying. Projections enhanced the attire, another cutting-edge accomplishment, done here by John Hammer. It was the set, though, that gave contrasting charm to the show's delivery. Out of all the shows I have seen at Roxy's, this set may be one of my favorites, likewise completed by Hammer, with smart direction by Rick Bumgardner.

Another incentive for attending is that the proceeds for this show go to support not only the Mental Health Association but also the GLSEN Wichita Chapter and MCC Table of Hope, a church that I actually attend and can comment on the great work they do for the community and its fellow members. As you drive home from seeing this production of *Dog Sees God*, I want to leave you with this thought posed by Pastor Jackie Carter of that same church. She preached a magnificent message last Sunday that I think ties into the takeaway of what these teens face today. She said, "God doesn't send us trouble.

He is there through the troubling waters. God is with us to see us through."

On a lighter note, returning to Roxy's up next is the adorable comedy *The Golden Girls* starring Wichita's favorite celebrities. For ticket reservations, call 316-265-4400.