

A noisy review of A-State's "Noises Off"

COLUMN BY
LAILA CASIANO

STAFF WRITER

"Noises Off," was my first A-State theater production, and it did not disappoint.

The show is a play within a play in which the 'actors' on stage go from camaraderie to dissolution in exaggerated and comical manners.

The first act depicts the final dress rehearsal of the play "Nothing On." It seems like a normal play until the audience hears someone yelling from the back of the auditorium. Lloyd, the director for "Nothing On," gives feedback to the actors from the audience.

Lloyd, played by Trey Moore, begins to move around by going down the steps of the auditorium and swiftly heads toward the stage.

Having an actor be so close to the audience was a fun and unique idea I really appreciated, as it felt interactive. He passed by me at one point because I was seated at the end of my aisle.

In Act 2 (my favorite), the

setting takes place all "backstage," opening with a sense of urgency and panic over Doty and Garry hiding and locking themselves in their dressing room.

Act 2 takes place a month after Act 1, so a lot of the established friendships and relationships were now falling apart. The alluded "secret" relationship between Doty and Garry is now over and coming to a shock to the audience, Lloyd cheated on Poppy. While Lloyd is too busy going after Brooke, Poppy attempts to tell him multiple times that she is pregnant with Lloyd's baby.

The way she reveals this information surprised me. After being frustrated with his constant attempts to ignore her, she shouts it out loud for everyone to hear. I remember grabbing my friend's hand in utter shock over Poppy's massive truth bomb.

Michael Joseph, playing Garry, was the star for me in this act. Their broad range of facial expressions and their over-exaggerated wallowing, angry stomping and hostile

marching was hilarious.

At times, it felt like I was watching a silent film. The cast amazed me with their ability to communicate the anger, rage, confusion and sadness their characters felt without having to speak a word.

As for my favorite character, that honor easily goes to Selsdon, played by Luke Holt. Although Garry was the star for Act 2, Selsdon was the most comical and endearing character.

Selsdon was hard of hearing, so just the running joke of everyone in the cast shouting his lines only for him to get it wrong in the end was hilarious.

We see this in Act 3, in the last few minutes of the show where everything has already gone wrong. In a final attempt to preserve the little bit of composure they have left, they all encourage Selsdon to "bring the production home," but of course, he says his line wrong.

The characters' absurd and immature choices constantly surprised me and I was continuously laughing at the ongoing "inside"



Photo by Laila Casiano | Staff Writer

(From left to right) Michael Joseph, Judith Bossi and Emma Bryant rehearsing "Noises Off."

jokes the production had throughout. These jokes do a great job of endearing the audience to the characters.

However, with how strong Act 2 was, Act 3 fell a little flat in carrying the momentum. If you didn't pay attention to the playbill on the specific date

differences between each act, you would get a bit confused about the relationships between the cast members.

This is made worse by how distant everyone becomes from one another, especially between Garry and Doty.

Besides that, this was a

wonderful production, one that will guarantee you a laugh, a surprise and sympathy for the events laid out for these chaotic, dramatic and overly sensitive characters.

Official Score: 9/10

THIS WEEK'S POP PICK

LUCKY GILMORE | SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

"THE CAT IN THE HAT"

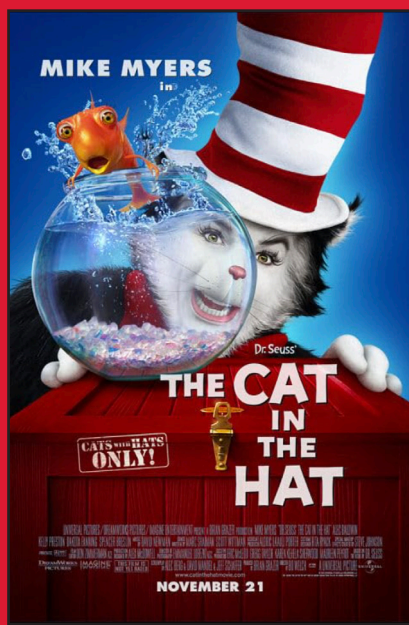


PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

A big day is approaching: the cult classic film "The Cat and the Hat", a live-action reimagining of the classic Dr. Seuss book, will be celebrating its 20th anniversary Nov. 20.

Recently, the movie went viral on social media platforms for a scene where Cat says, "Honey, it was ruined when she bought it," referring to the mother's dress he just destroyed when he used it as a towel.

This made me wonder what else was in the movie aged well and what has not.

Against popular opinion, I loved this movie as a kid. Upon hearing the anniversary was coming up, I knew I had to take a look back at the movie and see if my love for it stood up two decades later.

This movie has a 10% Rotten Tomatoes rating, so I knew I must have been missing something as a child watching this movie.

I should forewarn: I am a lover of very bad movies and this may cause some bias on my end. That being said, after my rewatch, I found all of Cat's jokes to land well with me.

Looking at the overall tone of my generation's humor, I can see how we all collectively adopted a love for awfully delivered jokes. If anyone was raised on movies similar to "The Cat in the Hat," the nostalgia alone can make you laugh.

The movie does have a startling racial stereotype for one of the main characters. The children's babysitter is a Taiwanese woman named Kwan who perpetuates the typical Asian stereotype that Hollywood so loved to abuse. She sports extremely thick-rimmed glasses and an equally thick accent.

One can hope it was not an intentional decision by the director but usually, in Hollywood, nothing is unintentional. Without excusing that unnecessary and inappropriate part of the movie, I do not understand the hate it received for other elements.

The overuse of CGI was a common complaint I ran into while doing research for this movie. I agree that the CGI was over the top, but I do disagree with it being a negative aspect of the movie. I think it brings the movie the child-like wonder brought by Dr. Seuss' stories that we know and love.

"The Cat in the Hat" provides ridiculous humor for parents to enjoy while watching, as well as helpful lessons kids watching can learn from. In my opinion, it is a well-rounded movie for all to enjoy if you're looking for something fun and a good laugh for all.

To commemorate this monumental anniversary, I suggest that everyone watch "The Cat in the Hat" and give the movie a second chance to redeem itself.

Overall Rating: 8/10 (for a guide on how The Herald scores its reviews, visit astatetheherald.com)



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUCKY GILMORE

Lucky Gilmore dressed as the Cat in the Hat in 2012.

Set your expectations "Higher" for Chris Stapleton

COLUMN BY
CAROLINE AVERITT

LIFE EDITOR

Despite being born and raised in Arkansas, I've never been a big fan of country music.

So, when I found out about the new Chris Stapleton album, "Higher," I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and give it a listen. My only prior exposure to his music was "Tennessee Whiskey" and his feature on "I Bet You Think About Me" by Taylor Swift.

The most notable thing about Stapleton is his voice. He showcases major talent with his rich and deep voice and can reach into his falsetto effortlessly. I am not the only one who appreciates his voice; he won Male Vocalist of the Year at the CMA Awards for the seventh time Nov. 8.

If you like Stapleton's previous work, you will like this album. I suppose he has found what works for him and he's sticking to it.

My favorite track, "Think I'm In Love With You," uses a sound unlike the rest of the album. He uses a funky bass line that mixes his country voice with a '70s-inspired sound.

Since I'm not a huge country fan, I did not like the sound of most of the album. I had a hard time getting through the whole thing because it all sounded the same to me.

However, I did not want to give up on this album. I decided to read the lyrics without hearing the music to see if I enjoyed the songwriting.

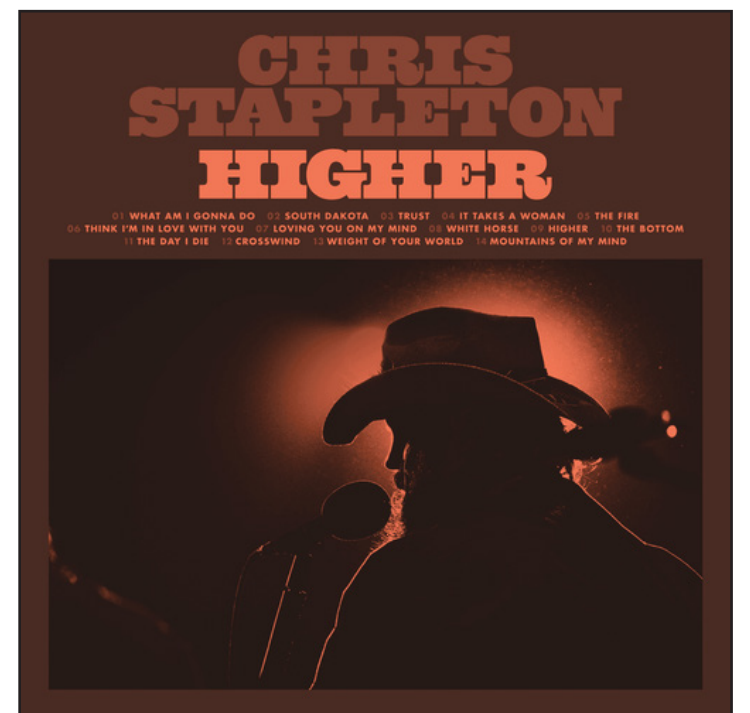


PHOTO COURTESY OF GENIUS

Album cover for Chris Stapleton's "Higher"

The lyricism in this album did not disappoint. My favorite lyric comes from the title track, "Higher," in which Stapleton sings, "I could shoot out into space / Count the endless sea of stars / But with you, I'd have to say / My heaven's never quite that far."

This is not the only instance in which Stapleton explores the theme of love. Much of his music seems to be about his wife, Morgane Stapleton, who co-produced the album and co-wrote "The Fire."

Another love-inspired lyric that stood out to me comes from "Trust," in which Stapleton sings, "Though we jump through hoops and dance on wires / Walk on broken glass and play with fire / Though we're blindfolded when

we turn on the light / I know everything will be alright."

Another common theme explored by Stapleton is substance use, which he beautifully articulates in "The Bottom." He sings, "The bottle holds the whiskey / The whiskey holds the man / The man holds the bottle when it's all that's left / And the left hand lights what the right hand holds / The smoke can't hide what the heart regrets."

While I did not love listening to this album, I think Stapleton has real musical talent and can write beautiful and poetic lyrics. While this album did not convert me into a country music lover, I am glad I gave it a shot.

Official Score: 7/10

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE AT A-STATE

CAROLINE AVERITT

LIFE EDITOR

LAILA CASIANO

STAFF WRITER

November is Native American Heritage Month: a time to celebrate the customs, language and culture of Native Americans in the United States.

Only 45 students of Native American heritage attend Arkansas State University this year. With a total of 14,032 undergraduate and graduate students, Native Americans account for about 0.32% of the A-State student population.

“We’re still people. We have our voices small, but we’re still here,” Christopher Jackson said.

Christopher Jackson

For Christopher Jackson, an A-State online graduate who received his doctorate in nursing practice for nursing education from Globe, Arizona, this month is a somber time.

“I feel like (Native American Heritage Month was created) to make up for the mistakes of Columbus Day being in the same month and Thanksgiving. It’s kind of a slap in the face,” Jackson said.

Jackson is from the San Carlos Apache tribe and is an enrolled tribal citizen of the Navajo Nation.

When he was a child, Jackson frequently traveled to powwows all over the country to participate as a Men’s Fancy Dancer.

Jackson said many people do not understand the culture of reservations.

“You don’t have to go around the world or to another country to experience poverty and what a third-world environment would be,” he said. “All you have to do is go to a reservation that is still here.”

“Our tribe people and the elders, they’re all dying or building up walls to where they don’t want anyone else in. If they don’t pass on that culture, it’s going to be gone,” Hailey Needham said.

Hailey Needham

Hailey Needham, a junior nursing student from Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, comes from the Ojibwe tribe. She said it is important to preserve Native American culture.

“Our tribe people and the elders, they’re all dying or building up walls to where they don’t want anyone else in. If they don’t pass



Hailey Needham wearing traditional regalia at the Bear River Pow Wow.



Christopher Jackson competing as a Men’s Fancy Dancer at a powwow.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAILEY NEEDHAM

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER JACKSON



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER JACKSON

Christopher Jackson



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAILEY NEEDHAM

Hailey Needham

on that culture, it’s going to be gone,” Needham said.

Needham continues to uphold her family heritage by collecting bald eagle feathers and having cleansing ceremonies with burning sage, also known as smudging.

Needham often cooks traditional Native American dishes, such as fry bread and wild rice soup. She said wild rice soup is difficult to make because of how it is harvested.

“It’s not like the wild rice you can buy in the store, it’s a dark black long grain, and they harvest it out of canoes and they hit the base with a stick and it’s ridiculously expensive and hard to get.”

Needham said she struggles with people not believing her Native American heritage.

“It used to bother me, and now it rarely does. You can believe what you want,” Needham said.

The “Indian” Mascot

A-State has a history of using Native American imagery, as the retired trio mascot was the “ASU Indian Family.” The family consisted of Chief Big Track, an unnamed brave and an unnamed princess.

In 2005, the National Collegiate Athletic Association

banned “ethnically or racially derogatory mascots.”

In response, A-State changed its mascot to the Red Wolves in 2008.

“I find it comical, but I think my personal view on this, just from looking at other professional sports is like, what if this was a representation or a stereotypical image of a Jewish person, or an Islamic person?” Jackson said. “Or maybe somebody who comes from a very specific South Pacific Island or community? That would definitely change the whole conversation.”

Needham said she does not find the previous mascot offensive.

“People choose a school or mascot because I think that (symbolizes) something strong,” Needham said. “Honestly, I kind of wish it was the Indians.”

Martha Spack, vice chancellor of student affairs, said since the mascot was changed, most imagery related to the Indian mascot has been put in storage or donated to the A-State Museum.

“We have had issues in the past with displaying some of our historical memorabilia that had an ‘Indian’ theme to



Photos by Shelby Russom | Staff Photographer

Pictured above is a bust of a Native American on display on the third floor of the Reng Student Union. Pictured below on the left is an A-State yearbook from 1967. Pictured below on the right is the street sign for Cherokee Ave.

them because we were the “Indians,” Spack said.

Currently, the third floor of the Reng Student Union has a glass display case with nine bronze statues of Native Americans made by artist Mark Hopkins.

Spack said she has not received any formal

complaints about the display.

Native American Awareness
Needham said she wants more Native American history to be taught because she feels like it is being forgotten.

Jackson said he wants people to remember Native American people still exist and the population is strong and lively.

“We’re still people. We have our voices small, but we’re still here,” Jackson said. “I think it would just be fundamentally important for people to have a better education and a better knowledge base on Indigenous people in this country that were here before them.”