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Fossom

Humanities 1010

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Response Paper 1 – *Lend Me a Tenor*

For the first response paper, I chose to experience a musical theater. The play, *Lend Me a Tenor*, was put on at the Hales Center Theater. I chose to go see a play primarily because I enjoy theater performances and because this was categorized as a comedy, a play type that I tend to enjoy. The day of attendance was January 24, so this meets the one week deadline set by the professor.

To begin, I will write a quick synopsis of the play so that a common ground will exists for the later analysis of the play. The play takes place in the year 1934, and a world class tenor by the name of Tito Merelli, is in town to perform at an Opera. Henry Saunders is the one in charge of the opera that is about to be performed and hopes that since Merelli, being a renowned tenor, will allow his opera theater to become more recognized and become more popular. The opera is about to have their final dress rehearsal, but Merelli is nowhere to be found. Henry, and his personal assistant Max Garber, begin to panic and try to figure out what to do about Merelli being missing.

While all of this is going on, Maggie Saunders, Henry’s daughter, wants to see Merilli, and is preparing for his arrival. Max informs Maggie that Merilli may not come, and in turn that she should not get her hopes up to high. Since the pressure is on for Henry to direct a great performance, he discusses alternative plans with Max if Merilli were to not show. Max, having sung opera before, suggests that he could impersonate Merilli. Max begins to sing when Merilli and his wife, Maria, come into the hotel room prepared for them. Saunders is relieved and leaves the hotel room. Merilli, as it ends up, has a stomach ache and is in too rough of a shape to try and perform in the opera. Maria goes into the bedroom and finds that Maggie was hiding in the closest. She assumed that this was Merilli’s secret lover and decides to write a Dear John letter telling Merilli that she is leaving. What Maria does not know is that Maggie is only a fan and simply wanted Merilli’s autograph. Maria storms off and resolves to never come back. Merilli, now distressed, begins to form a bond with Max. They talk for a while and Max decides that it would be best if Merilli was to get some sleep. Max gives Merilli some tranquilizers and becomes drowsy. Merilli finds Maria’s note and threatens to kill himself. Later, Max finds Merilli down and thinks that he is dead. Saunders returns to get Merilli to the opera, but Max tells him that he is dead. Saunders decided that Max will impersonate Merilli for the performance. Merilli awakens and the rest of the play is full of mistaken identities and becomes very complicated. In the end, Max and Maggie fall in love and Maria and Merilli get back together.

The first of Goethe’s questions is, “what is the artist trying to do?” To answer this question, the artist must first be identified. In this case, the artist would be the director of this production, Kymberly Mellen. This artist seemed to be aiming to produce a play that was strictly for entertainment reasons, but some other elements of the play can be interpreted as other aims of the artist. One common of the element was renewed love and deeper commitment. This happened to two of the protagonists, Max and Merilli. Both found a renewed love within the play and resulted in a deeper commitment with their loves. As stated before, one of the main purposes of the play was to be for entertainment purposes. This can be said because the play contained many comical and ironic elements throughout the whole play. Now that a few of the main aims of this play have been identified, entertainment and renewed love, they can be analyzed by how well they were done.

The second of Goethe’s questions is, “how well does he do it?” This question aims to help one critically analyze one’s reactions to a play. For the first aim, entertainment reasons, I think that the artist did a fantastic job. The fast paced flow of the play along with the unpredictable turn of events made this theater performance very enjoyable and humorous. I adored all the characters and their interaction with one another and the whole development of the plot in general. The initial plot allows the ending to be full of surprises because of the mistaken identities and the reunion of Merilli and Maria. The second aim, the renewal of love, was also done very well because of, once again, the development of the play early on. Maria’s and Merilli’s separation allows the characters to do several things that they would not be able to do otherwise, such as Merilli seeing another women for a short brief moment. This only highlights the renewal of love amongst several of the characters.

The third and final of Goethe’s questions is, “was it worth doing?” In all, I think that the play was worth going to and watching simply because it allowed me to forget about all the demands of the world and just relax for only a moment. After all, is this not the purpose of art? The entertainment quality of the play was unmatched and I could not stop laughing because of how enjoyable and well done the play was. This was the first comical play I have seen and I would not hesitate to see another comical performance.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed the *Lend Me a Tenor* performance put on by the Hales Center Theater. I hope that this is the first of many comedies that I watch. I would highly recommend this performance to anyone who is interested.