

Review of "Working"

By Sarah Carter

The lights dimmed and the crowd grew silent. In the dark we saw the actors' figures scurrying to their places. My husband and I squeezed hands while waiting expectantly for the show to begin. It was our third Perseverance play. We were excited to absorb the cultural benefits of living in a town with such talent and dedication to the arts. Upbeat jazz music met our ears as the stage was revealed in a bath of colored light. The actors were dressed as people of the American community: a waitress in her pinafore, a fireman in turnout gear, a UPS delivery man in his brown suit, a cleaning woman with her duster, a supermarket checker with her apron. In unison they sang a song whose words called for somebody to notice, somebody to notice the work they did every day. Their collective voice asked for the notoriety that has come to be expected by America's younger generation; an "I" voice, rather than the "we", or "us" that may have been present in the last century. Our society has become increasingly focused on the individual and "Working" reflects this social change.

The play is a series of interviews collected by Studs Terkel in the 1970's. Sharing their stories, the play acknowledges the lives of regular American people who don't normally get commended or recognized for their efforts. Their 9-5 schedules are dutifully carried out day after day without a "thank you" or a "gee, you're doing a great job."

The updated references to cell phones, computers, and current issues made the play relevant to today's society. Traffic jams for instance are a reality of the American metropolitan lifestyle. People eat their breakfasts, comb their hair, do their makeup, and talk on their cell phones, all while driving to work at an ant's pace saying, "Damn, this traffic jam."

"Working" shows there is a story to be told by each face you meet on the street. After the performance, we walked out into the rain feeling rejuvenated about humanity. There are unique stories that each person in our community can tell from their daily experiences.

At the same time, the play caused me to wonder about the collective unhappiness that seems to be prevalent in our society. People are specialized in their jobs. They do the same thing day after day. They feel locked into the working lifestyle because the bills must be paid. People feel trapped as their lives are wasted working for unappreciative bosses. The breath of fresh air seems to come only if dreams are kept close to their hearts and they are able to pass them on to their children. The last act, "Fathers and Sons" lends this hopeful, yet complicated message to America's future.

Go see "Working"! It runs until February 16. You'll feel especially proud when you recognize actors that are your friends, or you've seen them on campus or in the grocery store. We happened to know three of the actors. Seeing them perform on stage was a new environment for our relationships as well as a kick. I now have the utmost respect for their dedication. The immense effort they invest is admirable. They have spent months rehearsing, memorizing, and belting out their melodic chords for the benefit of us Juneauites. Way to go Chris, Jeremy, Beth, and all the other Perseverance staff that make it possible for us to enjoy such a great show.



Compiled by Joshua Edward

Ah, February: the days are getting longer, and love fills the air. What are your plans for **Valentine's Day**? Did you know that the Catholic church recognizes at least three different St. Valentines? The origins of the holiday itself are shrouded in mystery, though methinks it probably has at least as much to do with getting the greeting card industry through the lean spring months as anything, but heck, I'm just a big ol' cynic. Anyway, what will you do for your love on this special day? Necco hearts? Red lace? Perhaps he or she would enjoy the 3rd Annual Juneau Arts and Humanities Council **Wearable Arts Extravaganza**. This year's event will be at 7:30 p.m. on February 14th, at the ANB Hall downtown. Featuring a "runway show" and silent auction, it promises to be a night of wacky, wearable fun and a chance to buy your beau that duct tape tux he's always wanted.

Theater in the Rough will be presenting **The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)** starting Friday the 14th at McPhetret's Hall, tickets available at Hearthside Books. The production will run through the end of the month, call for dates.

February is also **Black History Month**, so show your respect for diversity in our community by trotting on down to St. Ann's Parish Hall on Saturday the 15th for an "evening of entertainment," in honor of Black History Month, from 4-8 p.m.

The 15th will also allow all you space cadets who forgot the big sweetheart's day a chance at romantic redemption: the "back room cinema" at the Silverbow will be showing "**Man and Woman**" at 8:00 p.m. The Oscar winning French film follows the romance of two recently widowed individuals.

In honor of February's "other" V-Day, Perseverance Theatre presents **The Vagina Monologues**, Eve Ensler's now classic rumination on gender, misogyny, and yes, vaginas. Centennial Hall, 7:00 p.m. The performance will benefit AWARE, so you really ought to attend! Tickets available at Perseverance, Hearthside Books, or AWARE.

Our very own University of Alaska kicks in their contributions to culture with the **UA Science for Alaska** lecture series at Centennial Hall. The events will be held on Mondays throughout February at 7:30 p.m., and will feature talks on the aurora borealis, volcanoes, and Alaska's salmon populations. Did I mention it's free? It is! Last but not least, Juneau Parks and Rec's **Treadwell Ice Arena** is now open to the public. With public skating five days a week, and rentals on site, you have no excuse not to turn an ankle and fall on yer bum. Call Juneau Parks and Rec, 586-5226 for details.

Preview

Wednesday, February 12 – Snowboarding in SE Alaska, Mark Schultz, SAC 9 p.m.

Thursday, February 13 – UAS Pride Day! Wear UAS insignia clothing or blue, silver, and white to show you pride at UAS!

Saturday, February 15 – Banff Mountain Film Festival, Centennial Hall, 7 p.m. \$8 w/UAS ID, \$12 general

Sunday, February 16 – Ice Skating at Treadwell Arena, 7:30-9:30 p.m., free admission. Skate rental \$2 or bring your own.

Sunday, February 16 – The Vagina Monologues, Centennial Hall, 7 p.m. \$20 general admission. Tickets at

Hearthside Books, Rainy Day Books, and AWARE

Monday, February 17 and Wednesday, February 19 – SAC Family Night, 6-7 p.m.

The Whalesong wishes everyone a happy week!

