

Good 'Ole



By Iris Wiener

Charlie Brown

Loveable Loser Ponders Life In Hilarious Peanuts Parody

After a nasty bout of rabies, Snoopy has gone to a better place... or at least someplace unearthly. *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* is set about ten years after the end of the half-century long running comic Peanuts. The beloved Beagle's demise is only the beginning of this hilarious, darkly imaginative take on the beloved comic strip's characters' fate.

An "unauthorized parody," *Dog Sees God* follows "CB" on a quest to determine the meaning of life while coming to terms with his adored friend's violent death (which we learn includes Snoopy's vicious attack on his own buddy, Woodstock). Eddie Kaye Thomas ("American Pie") is perfectly cast as the sarcastic realist that is the teenage Charlie Brown. Decked out in his signature yellow shirt and khaki shorts, first impressions reveal that CB is the same on the outside, but inside he has gone through quite the transformation.

This unique story combines the audience's sentimental knowledge of the Peanuts gang with a poignant, humorous look at the way our society distinguishes and labels the best

and worst of us. Schroeder, who is now called Beethoven, must come to terms with his homosexuality (and yes, he still hides behind that darned piano). Lucy is locked up in the looney bin because of her tendency to set things on fire.

Linus has become Van, a stoner (and has even inhaled the ashes of his burnt blanket, forever becoming one with it), and the once fly infested Pigpen has grown into Matt, a homophobic football player. Charlie Brown's gothic, over-dramatic sister even takes the stage to contribute to some already frenetic and angsty situations.

Thomas' dubious innocence won't horn teenagers over when he starred in the "American Pie" films, and it's enjoyable to watch him draw from a more mature, honed place to convey CB's reckless heart and questionability.

The cast is rounded out with a whirlwind of teenage heroes and heartthrobs, including Eliza Dushku ("Bring it On," television's), America Ferrera ("The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants," "Real Women Have Curves") and Ian Somerhalder ("Lost"). Ferrera stands out as CB's freaky, re-bellious sister, a role so against her type that its perfection is stimulating.

Perhaps the funniest of the Peanuts characters to make appearances are Tricia (Kelli Garner) and Marcy (Ari Graynor), originally known as Peppermint Patty and Marcie. One known as the freckle-faced tomboy, and the other a

bookish genius, the two have grown into voluptuous vixens with wonderfully written traces of their pasts rearing their heads with impeccable timing. Typifying all dumb-blonde-bimbo jokes, the girls share trashy liplocks on a high school picnic table before enjoying their peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with a side of vodka.

Bert V. Royal's play earned top honors at the 2004 Fringe Festival and GLAAD's Media Award for best off-off-Broadway production that same year, and the current production leaves no room for wondering why. Trip Cullman's direction is spotless, as every sound, sight, and motion is perfectly in tune with the creative tone of the play.

Without the convenient use of thought bubbles, Cullman managed to highlight the insecurities (or lack thereof) of all players. David Korins' colorful, sensory set draws its audience into the vamped 2006 edition of the playful comic strip, box by box.

Culminating in a touching, powerful ending, *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* is an incredibly unique experience, perfect for mature theatergoers looking for a quality production.

Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead is currently playing at Century Center for the Performing Arts (111 East 15th Street). The play performs Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at 8 p.m., Fridays at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., Saturdays at 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., and Sundays at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$65.00 and \$39.50. On Fridays at 10 p.m. tickets are only \$25.00. Visit www.dogseesgod.com for more information about purchasing tickets.

