



Article by Emilee Bae '14 Layout by Mingxi Li '14 Photos by Megan Tung '13

The Hotchkiss Dramatic Association's spring show garnered considerable anticipation and prompted a great deal of talk. Bert V. Royal's *Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenage Blockhead* tells the story of our generation's beloved "Peanuts" characters, now teenagers with problems of their own. The small cast of eight includes Sonia Case '14, Ian McClure '13, Matt Lebowitz '15, Christian Lange '13, Irisdelia Garcia '14, Austin Kim '13, Samantha Jannotta '14, and Eva Araya '13. The play deals with a myriad of intense and controversial topics; some suggested that parents come see the show first to deem it appropriate for their children. Many of the issues dealt with in the show include drug abuse, eating disorders, and identity crises.

The show's director, Allen Babcock, revealed that he was initially drawn to the play after its performance at the International Fringe Festival in New York; "the situations and scenarios that the characters encounter in their lives, the parallels between the characters lives and the lives of our students: While the characters experience things in a heightened

way much of what they encounter exist in subtle ways in our life here at Hotchkiss and, in general, at schools".

The play's intensity forced the cast to maintain a high level of trust. Babcock stated that, as the director, "the most challenging part of this process was engaging students in an honest way about topics that affect their lives on a daily basis while maintaining a sense of professionalism and detachment, understanding that we are creating characters that are just that, characters, and not skewed portrayals of ourselves."

Despite some of the darker subject matter, the show remained quite comical; the characters discussed the origins of the "spork" and subtly harkened back to their childhoods with Peanuts references. Babcock was "most proud of the acting work the students have completed in the process." Bevan Willoughby, an exchange student from South Africa, exclaimed, "Bravery! That is a characteristic that each member of the play had. It is incredible to have such a mature and shocking play in high school."

"It has not been easy and at times it's been very frustrating," Babcock added, "but we have worked together as a team, as a group of actors, as a cast, to honor the subject matter and the situations portrayed".

The production raked in a copious amount of wonderful reviews over the weekend of the third of May and dedicated the Sunday Matinee show's proceeds to the Tyler Clementi Foundation. Dou Dou, a senior at Hotchkiss, wrote, "The play is extremely powerful. Wordless. I was on an emotional roller coaster as the story unfolded. I truly admired everyone that worked on the play – their effort and dedication has made leaving Hotchkiss just so much harder for me."

After being cast as CB's sister in *Dog Sees God*, I can't deny that I had my doubts about the play. It is definitely controversial, and I wasn't sure if Hotchkiss was ready for it. After months of rehearsal, as we delved further into our characters and grew as a cast, I realized just how impactful the messages were, and I was so proud to be a part of it. I guess I want to say a huge thank you to the Hotchkiss community for being so open minded and so supportive. You made the whole process worthwhile.
- Sam Jannotta

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