

Talking With...’ is a 10

The word “monologue” is defined as: 1) a form of dramatic entertainment, comedic solo or the like, by a single speaker; 2) any composition, as a poem, in which a single person speaks alone; 3) a prolonged talk or discourse by a single speaker, and; 4) a part of a drama in which a single actor speaks alone.



While these four definitions may be very similar, the monologue, as part of a play’s script, can take on an infinite number of forms, styles and genres. It can be tragic, comic, hilarious, devastating and everything in between.

Plays featuring a series of monologues can be a risky proposition. Some audiences want a full-length story with a beginning, middle and end. They expect a play that follows a three-act structure and tells a multi-layered story. It can be challenging to create a play that is just as appealing that contains many disconnected short stories, rather than the typical single long story format. Director Ron Robinson is taking on that challenge with his production of Talking With at Little Theater of Fall River.

“It’s like directing 10 different mini-plays, but there really is no different challenge than directing one long play,” Robinson says. “It was more difficult to create a ‘family’ atmosphere that usually occurs because, until this week, all the participants were not together. This is not really a challenge, just a different experience.”

It was the simplicity and the variety that attracted Robinson to the play, he says. Variety is the name of the game here, as the play features a wide-ranging diversity of characters, including a woman in her 23rd hour of labor, a bag lady’s, an auditioning actress and a rodeo rider. The stories of these women run the gamut from hilarious to tragic, touching on everything in between.

Only having to focus on one monologue does benefit the actors, Robinson says, “There is not as much of a time commitment as there is in most shows as they did not need to be at all rehearsals.”

The rehearsal environment involved other differences from a typical show.

“There is no interaction at all between the characters, so each actor only had to focus on their individual role. Therefore, it was a one on one process between actor and director.”

Shows of this type occasionally tie the monologues together with a common theme, but not this time," Robinson says. "There really is no connection between the monologues - other than that they are all delivered by women who have something to say. The women are young, old and in between. Some of the stories are sad, some are funny and some are just a little bit strange."

He adds that they are all entertaining and provide "great opportunities for the actors to shine."

When asked if he has a favorite monologue from the play, Robinson says it would be "very difficult to choose." Seeing these unique and entertaining monologues will, he hopes, be a "different" experience that will wow audience members. Unlike a typical play, this one will have 10 chances, around 10 minutes each, to make that happen.

Talking With..., the Little Theatre, the Fire Barn, 340 Prospect Street, Fall River. www.littletheatre.net
Runs Jan 19-29