

In the Company of Sinners and Saints

Information and Synopsis by Christian Wallace

Two people meet for the first time. At the conclusion of their meeting, one says to the other, “I’ll Facebook you.” A friendship is established – online. Social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter have become a part of society’s general consciousness. Now old friends can communicate miles apart with the click of a mouse, family members can keep in touch without ever picking up a telephone, and stepping out the front door is not even necessary to meet someone new. These sites have transformed the way people connect, but, with their arrival, age-old questions concerning ethical behavior have been taken to another realm: the digital world.

Monica Michell’s, “play-in-progress,” *In the Company of Sinners and Saints*, does not seek to answer questions concerning this digitalized world of right-and-wrong, but rather aims to generate questions and serve as a springboard for discussion about moral ambiguity. The play, written by Michell (a Texas State playwright and former University Seminar instructor), is specifically intended for college freshmen enrolled in a University Seminar class and is the only theatrical production ever commissioned for a First Year Experience program. Beyond being applicable to new students beginning college careers, the work-in-progress play is a unique, holistic approach to current issues befitting of this year’s Common Experience theme, *A Whole New Mind*.

In the Company of Sinners and Saints follows the main character, Lucy, as she is faced with a plethora of tough decisions after being cruelly humiliated on Facebook. Lucy’s story takes an imaginative twist when she ends up in coma where she comes face-to-face with her patron

saint in a hospital-room limbo. Original music, believable characters, and a good dose of humor help the play confront a wide range of issues including the difference between revenge and avenge, similarities between religion and technology, and how to find truth in the distorted reality of the digital age. Contemporary terms like “cyber-bully” and “gossip blog” are mixed with the timeless theme of “doing the right thing” to create real-world situations that today’s students will be able to easily identify with.

Because this play is still evolving, University Seminar students have a unique opportunity to help shape an artistic piece by providing feedback. In addition to the rare chance to have a say in the development of a published work, many freshmen, before attending these performances, will have never seen a dramatic production and will be afforded the invaluable first-hand experience of watching a live performance while learning how to conduct themselves using proper theater etiquette. *In the Company of Sinners and Saints* is an exciting opportunity for the freshman class of Texas State students to take off their earphones, turn off their cell phones, and plug in to something different and completely worthwhile.