The Grand Parade Review
By Stephanie Schieder, writer on February 11, 2016

‘The Grand Parade’ brought fun and excitement to the Alexander Kasser stage of Montclair State University!

Picture an early 20th century circus scene: a tent in the center, surrounded by a trapeze and silk ribbons. As the audience walked to their seats, all could tell that the evening was going to be magical. The Grand Parade began with dancing and circus acts as the stage transformed into the year 1900, which was the start of the 20th century. Using multimedia projections, major historical events and movements were narrated as the actors and actresses portrayed them on stage.

The Grand Parade was inspired by the Russian-French artist, Marc Chagall and his idea that the world is one’s kaleidoscope. This artsy theme inspired the vivid colors encompassing the stage throughout the entire performance.

Audience members watched as 100 years of history unfolded in front of their eyes. The Grand Parade was entertaining for all ages! Adults and grandparents were able to relive the movements that defined their generation, while children got to see the events they learned about in history class as they were reenacted.

“Your job is to have fun,” said Jedediah Wheeler, the executive director of Peak Performances as he introduced the show.

That job was certainly accomplished as the talented ensemble executed all areas of performance during the show. From singing and dancing to flying through the air on a trapeze, every moment was phenomenal. The piano and string accompaniment was performed on stage, which added another level to the performance. Nothing could have been changed to make this show better, as each component was so well crafted it seemed as if a puzzle was completed when the ensemble took their final bows.

What stood out most in The Grand Parade was how art and history were combined and used to compliment each other. The absolute chaos of wars during the 20th century was depicted so powerfully by means of multimedia projections, sound effects, and the artists’ acting abilities. Images representing the Holocaust were also illustrated on stage. Aside from this, prohibition, women’s suffrage, the Civil Rights Movement, and the AIDS epidemic were all revisited. On a lighter side, one of the artists used the silk ribbons to reenact the landing on the moon while another used the trapeze to portray Amelia Earhart.

Each week, Peak Performances brings five-star quality productions to the Alexander Kasser Theater. Please visit peakperfs.org for information and tickets on upcoming shows. All seats are $20 and free to MSU undergraduate students with a present school ID. Also check out Doubleedgetheatre.org for more information on Double Edge Theatre!