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audience reviews

A Piece of My Heart, American River College, Theatre Arts Department

Review: Pamela Downs, the cast, and the technical designers should be extremely proud of this show. We laughed, cried, suffered and grew right along with the characters. The play itself is extremely powerful, and the chemistry of the cast made it more so. The technical aspects of the show enhanced the experience of "being there". Well done, American River College!

Review: This production was second to none. Clearly the best show that I have seen at American River college, as far as the dramas go. The cast was superb and obviously connected very well. I connected most with the Mary Jo and Whitney characters. Very powerful and very moving- especially for an opening night! Great job!

Review: This play was wonderful. The set wasn't much, but the acting made up for it. All the actresses did such a wonderful job and so did the three guys. I cried and laughed, but mainly cried. I left in tears. Everyone did such a wonderful job. I highly recommend seeing the play.

Review: The American River College production of *A Piece of my Heart* is powerful, gripping, and relevant. The show relates the stories of several women who served in various capacities in the Vietnam War as a sort of surreal montage. The several independent experiences are presented as parallel memories seamlessly intertwined with one another to create a broader impression of the experiences of women in the war as a whole.

The cast is superb. Every actor was able to move between main character and support countless times without any feeling of interruption. The women were all very distinct from each other, but still created a

magnificent ensemble throughout the show. The three most terrific and powerful moments were captured by Kristine Aubert, Lauren Nardozi, and the woman who played the intelligence officer (I misplaced my program), but each cast member more than pulled their own weight with some pretty heavy material. It should also be added that the actors performed vocals, guitar, and bugle flawlessly, something I rarely see in local theater.

Pamela Downs' directing is the key to this show performed in the round. I felt very much an involved observer as I sat just a few feet from the actors. I never was left out of a scene which can be difficult for directors and actors when the show is surrounded by audience. The sound was perfectly timed and the music was engaging without being distracting. The song selections seemed perfect for each moment, a memorable example being Somebody To Love which seemed to have been written just to be used in those exact moments in the play.

But the real accomplishment for this show was the way it engaged the audience so deeply and so profoundly, but without the slightest sense of violation- it wasn't forced. It seemed like everyone in the audience was affected in a different way and for different reasons, but everyone was affected. Even me, though I thought I was prepared against it. This is why we go to the theater, you should see this show.
- Josh Hooper

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