Rudd, Mol, Weisz star in LaBute's The Shape of Things

By Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

When Neil LaBute was promoting his 1997 film in the company of M. m, he was constantly being asked by female journalists if he thought women could be as bad as the men in his film. “I answered that, certainly, I thought women were capable of being as deceitful or doing such underhanded things to someone,” says LaBute. “But I imagined it would always be a more solitary effort, rather than the communal boys-club feeling that in the company of M. m had.”

While in England a few years later, LaBute, a close group of friends adapted the play. The Shape of Things thus took form. LaBute had been thinking about the free-spirit-introduced into the mix. She even created a character named Paul Rudd for the role of Adam, the under-graduate student who falls for Evelyn’s manipulations. Rudd had previously been in LaBute’s play Bash, where he portrayed a nice guy who became a psychotic killer. He is best known for his starring roles in Clueless, Object of My Affection and most recently his recurring role on the hit series Friends.

While LaBute always had Rudd in mind for the role of Adam, he didn’t have much of a challenge filling the rest of the cast. Rachel W new, the British star of The Mummy and About Bob had cast as Evelyn. She even created an American accent for the role. LaBute rounded out the cast with Gretchon Mol and Fred W new, who had in a variety of films from Rounders to The Thirteen Floor. Weller has made his mark on the Broadway theatre scene in the past few years, even winning the prestigious Drama Desk award.

The play’s original production shocked critics with its blaring Smashing Pumpkins sound track and the actors’ interaction with the audience. “We’re really like the Smashing Pumpkins and we like them really loud. The audience is at a place where they are naturally at rest between scenes and they can talk amongst themselves and gather their thoughts. W didn’t allow them to do that, we just pulsed them with music. It also covered any scene changes when these guys were changing costumes and having being turned around,” said LaBute.

During Evelyn’s speech, a critical point in the play and film, the rest of the cast would find places to sit in the audience to watch her speech. “Paul, Gretchon and Fred would come to the audience and they would single out audience members and ask them questions,” said LaBute.

Rudd enjoyed unnerving audience members by sitting next to them for the dramatic event. “The people that would sit nearest to me could seldom ever look at me. It’s an interesting thing to go from observer to participant,” said Rudd.

As great as the stage experience was for the cast and crew, there were a few reasons why LaBute wanted to adapt the play. One of the dilemmas on the stage was that it was difficult to view Rudd as a fat, unattractive man because of his natural good looks. In the film, Rudd was able to wear a fat suit, makeup, and a prosthetic nose.

LaBute also wanted to have a

Sheryl Crow, others rock 10th annual Music Midtown

By Vivian Vakili
Entertainment Editor

Good thing the ticket said “rain or shine,” because not only would concertgoers have missed Sheryl Crow, but Bob Dylan as well. Very early on in Crow’s performance, thunder was heard and torrential rain followed. A man came on stage and asked people to calmly leave, promising that notice would be given as soon as the rain cleared and the concert was to resume.

Rain ing heavily by this time, many concertgoers were soaked through and by the time the 96 Rock stage was set to get to their respective vehicles. The only casualties were not water induced however. When the concert resumed, an added bonus was mudslide, situated where the grassy hill had been. This made for quite a precariously situation, and many people were seen falling onto the wet earth.

Unlike W woodstock however, there was not enough room for everyone to fiddle freen and so it was just a muddy mess. Even more annoying were the people who somehow thought it would be a good idea to crowd surf; they were promptly relieved of their idiotic fun however when concert security placed them on their feet and sent them out of the venue.

With so many reasons to complain, few people at any of the shows were. Admittedly, Crow put on an entertaining performance. She began with songs that were familiar, and ended with such hits as “Every Day Is a Winding Road,” and the classic masterpiece “Picture.” If you have not yet had the great joy of hearing “Picture,” you must quickly do so. “Picture” is the result of Sheryl’s collaboration with Kid Rock. She introduced the song as, “a little song I did with a guy named Bob Ritchie. You may know him as Kid Rock.” So the crowd was thus serenaded with her portion of the song. Too bad Kid was not there to supplement.

After Sheryl exited the stage, there was an hour into intermission before Bob Dylan made his appearance, or did he? Many in the crowd were dismayed and on his way, because they could not see him. Shrouded in his signature black coat, Bob had opted to stand at his keyboard, shielded by one of the gigantic amplifiers. The crowd chant ed, “Bob, where are you? We can’t see you!”

Bob, being the seasoned and time honored rock star that he is, paid no heed and it was not until the third or fourth song that he changed positions. However, those who had seen him at Music Midtown a couple of years ago might not have recognized him. By this year than he’d been two years ago.

While Dylan played on the 96 Rock Stage, Live put on perhaps one of the most entertaining performances of the entire concert on the 99X Stage. Lead singer Ed Kowalczyk knew exactly how to pump up his audience, playing such crowd energizing, recognizable hits as “‘I Alone’ and ‘Lightning Changes.’” He played them with such gusto that one would think that it was the first time belting them out.

Their noteworthy performances were the ones given by D. Lep
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record of his play to keep. "So often you do something in the theatre and it's gone," said LaBute. Another plus was the salary increase. "Totally paid more. You do theatre absolutely because you love it or you can't get another job. Outside of Andrew Lloyd Webber, it's not the most money making venture," said LaBute.

Additionally, LaBute is able to show everyone the cast's reaction to the dramatic conclusion in the film that he couldn't do in the play. Only the audience members close to the cast could see their reactions before.

Unfortunately changes had to be made to adapt it for the screen. LaBute changed the soundtrack to being from all Smashing Pumpkins songs to all Elvis Costello songs. "Smashing Pumpkins can barely get up and dirty in thirty seconds and we needed someone who was the antithesis of them, who had sharp poppy instantly recognizable tunes. They are so eclectic and there's so much to choose from. [Costello] writes such great songs about relationships," said LaBute.

LaBute had to cut Weisz's dramatic speech as well because: "what worked as a monologue in a performance, didn't work on film." The film does retain most of its theatrical feel however.

By the time filming began, the actors had already played their respective roles for over a year. Filming lasted a grand total of only 19 days.

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and Everclear. Deft Leppard's performance was amazing, proving that 40 year old men can still awe and will to exposure breasts in women under age 20. Dancing to powerballads, "Photograph" and "Pour Some Sugar on Me," the crowd could hardly contain its enthusiasm. More women than ever climbed up on their 6'2" boyfriends' shoulders and more underachievers than ever surferd to the front of the crowd.

Everclear's show had something of a nostalgic quality to it but just as before, all of their songs still sounded the tame. All in all, M usic Midtown had the same feel as it has in previous years, which meant one was in for a rushed concert series.