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Theatre 101-03

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*You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* Response Paper

*You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* was an excellent chance for the actors in Longwood Theatre Department to prove themselves, both as individual actors and as a team of actors. Due to the cast's talent and countless hours of practice, I was easily able to suspend my disbelief throughout the entire play and enjoy the story of Charlie Brown and his friends. While my experience in choir did lead to a few minor criticisms on diction and tone for some of the actors, the play overall was beautifully performed. All of the actors fit into their roles, Aaron Burstein doing exceptionally well at that in "My Blanket and Me", and worked together to provide a solid two hours of quality entertainment for their audience. There were also a couple delightful surprises, moments that turned out better than expected, including the round in "The Book Report", and the swift mood changes in "Not Bad at All".

Aaron Burstein played Linus quite well. Burstein was appropriately expressive and believable, and easily met the first requirement of an actor, which is being heard. In the song "My Blanket and Me", all of Burstein's best qualities as an actor were showcased. While singing, he maintained good tone and diction while being loud enough to be heard from where I sat in the back. His greatest moment as an actor was when he was struggling to leave his blanket. He connected with the audience, speaking directly to a member in the front row as he set his blanket down. Then he acted as any child would when leaving a beloved item behind, constantly looking back over his shoulder and becoming more and more anxious the further away he got. It

was a golden moment when he finally caved in and rushed back to his blanket and told the audience to never let him do that again, exhibiting the aftermath of an emotional ordeal as he clung to his blanket.

The ensemble as a whole was well cast. Each actor knew their role and how their role fit with the roles of the other actors, and behaved accordingly on stage. Due to their cooperation, pace, and cue pick-up, the scenes flowed seamlessly. While there were some actors who could have had better diction, Allen Coates and Garrett D. Reese specifically, overall, the actors' skills met the requirements of the script and the songs. The scene that truly showed off their ability to work together as one group was in the song "The Book Report" especially when it turned into a round near the end of the song. In order to perform the song well, each actor had to pick up on their cue right on the dot. Not too soon or too late, or else the song would get thrown off beat and throw everyone else off track. Together, the actors conveyed the plot of the play, and individually, each of them added details that made it even more interesting and believable.

The best scene overall in the play was the song where Garrett D. Reese, who plays Snoopy, sings "Not Bad at All". The blocking was excellent, Reese and his back-up dancers using the entire stage without making it seem forced. Even more remarkable was Reese's versatility when the mood changed in the middle of the song. The beginning of the song was very relaxed and content, but then Snoopy makes a realization and the mood shifts, becoming wild and ferocious. Reese was able to turn his demeanor on a dime, showing the audience what Snoopy liked to believe himself to be; a wild, ferocious animal that couldn't be tamed. That is, until he goes to pounce off of the top of his doghouse and realizes that the top of the doghouse is

pretty high up. Upon this second realization, Reese's mood shifts again, being meek and scared for a moment before returning to relaxed and content for the rest of the song.

Burstein provided a wonderful rendition of Linus, the cast as a whole worked beautifully as a team, and Reese showed incredible acting flexibility in "Not Bad at All". *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* was a good choice for the Longwood Theatre Department. It seemed to provide enough of a challenge for the actors to truly commit themselves to the play, but not be so difficult as to discourage them or result in a lower quality performance. The performance from each actor was easily believable, allowing for a continuous suspension of disbelief. To see these actors on stage again would be something I would greatly enjoy, be it in another production of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, or in a completely different play that highlights different talents within the actors.