

"Who Made Me?" by Dennis McSorley @ Off Center

by Abbie T

Happy Monday everyone! It's feeling very fall-like in Burlington today. Accordingly, I've holed up in a Starbucks to use the remainder of a gift card on a Salted Caramel Mocha (you thought I was going to say Pumpkin Spice Latte didn't you? HA! Gotcha) and tell you about the latest show presented by Off Center for the Dramatic Arts!

If you'll recall, in my last venture to Off Center, I was treated to an ear/eyegasm of music and movement from *The Roadsters*. This time around, it was a one-man show written and performed by Dennis McSorley entitled *Who Made Me*.

I don't know Dennis, but his Linked In profile tells me that he's "not a bad whistler, a strong swimmer and loyal friend." He's also a 15 year veteran of the Vermont stage. Linked In isn't wrong...but as usual, only scratches the surface of who we really are. If you're interested in knowing where McSorley learned all the tricks of the Alter Boy trade (hint: not in church) or how his objection to the war in Vietnam led him to realize his love of teaching.... you'll need to see *Who Made Me*.

With the advent of email, text, blogs and social media as our main forms of communication, I believe Americans have rediscovered the importance of our vocal chords. (the irony of my blogging about this is not lost on me) From *This American Life* to *Storycorps* to *The Moth*, NPR has been slowly capturing/driving the resurgence of American storytelling. And the reason people clamour to see a live performance of *The Moth* is because tone alone does not a story make. When you can SEE the storyteller, the story really comes alive.

The moment McSorley took the stage and began to speak, I felt as though I had struck up a conversation with the guy on the bar stool next to me in a local dive. While he waxes nostalgic, his acerbic wit keeps you laughing through the years of Catholic school and discovering girls. Later, as he softly sings a few verses of *Abraham, Martin and John*, you know this man was affected by the casualties of Vietnam in ways he can't yet/doesn't need to articulate.

He was joined on stage by nothing but an empty chair (something he handled much better than Clint Eastwood did at the RNC). My only beef was that the narrative seemed to end rather abruptly. Perhaps the piece is still a work-in-progress, but I feel McSorley could easily have filled another 30 minutes of my evening with stories and details from his young life.

The Awesomesauce

You never know what you're going to get at Off Center for the Dramatic Arts. Have you ever purchased a ticket to a movie/play/concert without really knowing anything about what you're going to see? I HIGHLY encourage you to do so. It's one of my favorite things. Movie trailers, rating sites and reviews exist to give you a preconceived notion about what you're going to see. And that's not a bad thing. But sometimes it's freeing to throw caution to the wind and force yourself to develop your own opinions. Let's call it Entertainment Roulette. Check you local paper for what stage performances/concerts/indy flicks are showing near you. Pick one. Go.

Dare to be disappointed, folks. Dare to have no expectations. Let live performance surprise you. Even if you hate it, you'll learn something. You won't regret it.