

Biblical 'Gaieties' continues its immoral reign

By [Elsa Parra](#)

"Gaieties" – it was funny when I could hear it? The show kicked off its annual Big Game Week musical production a little after 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 24 to a Memorial Auditorium packed with rowdy, slightly inebriated Stanford students and a handful of nervous alumni.

In this year's tale of Cal's inferiority complex and Stanford's pure awesomeness, Jesus Christ, a bothered yet innocent Stanford freshman, runs into trouble as Cal students and their ringleader, Lucifer, attempt to diminish Stanford's perfection by getting Jesus to commit all the seven cardinal sins in one evening. While the plot for "Gaieties 2010: The Last Temptation of Cal" was straight from the Bible, the production was anything but pure. Altogether, it was chaotic, inappropriate, slightly inaudible and not for the faint of heart, but hey, that's Gaieties.

Some of the more memorable acts of the evening came when the troupe capitalized on group stereotypes such as the Diaspora list, SLE and, of course, those sororities. Who didn't laugh at the uber-excited, tinsel-haired Thetas or the Black Panther-esque student as she chewed out the black Jesus Christ – of course Jesus is black in Gaieties – for wanting off the Diaspora list?

Gaieties also seems to have a way of finding any opportunity to be politically incorrect. One of the "Activisluts Fair" posters for Darfur Feast read: "Darfur Feast: We eat because they can't." If that statement does not disregard morality, I don't know what does.

There definitely were token moments in the show, yet they were fleeting and mostly random interjections of some sort. The crux of the problem was with the sound system. For some reason, the singers were almost always inaudible, and microphones were not turned on until actors were mid-sentence in Wednesday's performance.

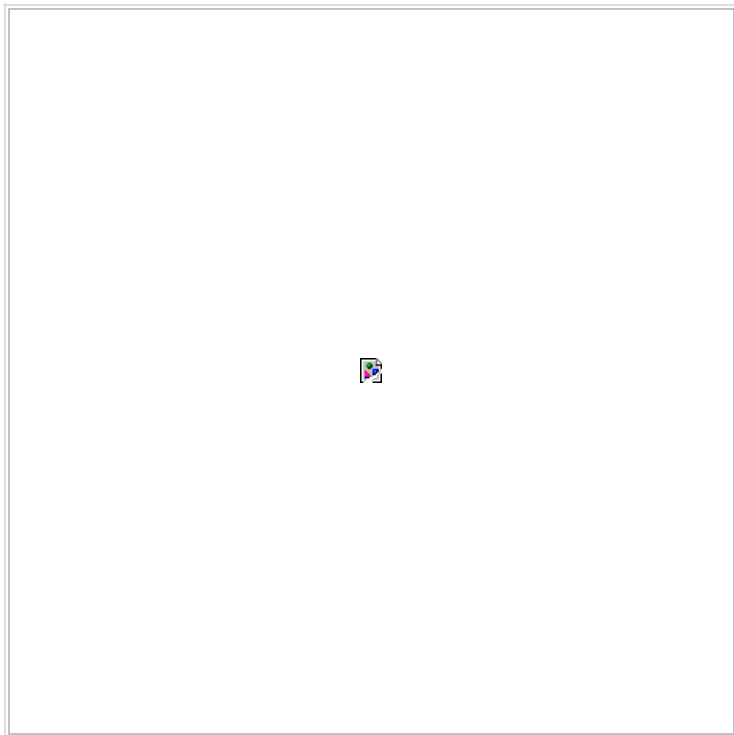
Although the sound may not have been there, the energy certainly was in attendance. The cast of 31 filled the stage well, with notable performances coming from Mary Beth Corbett '12, the requisite slut, and Benno Rosenwald '11, the atheist SLE-ster. At times, the cast overwhelmed the stage by frolicking too much in the background, making it difficult for the audience to concentrate on the main story, but the distractions were usually entertaining and thus not shunned.

Reading through the program, one could tell that the execution did not always do the writing justice. To every musical performance there are two parts: the singing and the choreography. Unfortunately, the singing during the musical performances was generally too high or too low for the audience to understand the lyrics, so we missed out on abrupt innuendos, classic jabs at Cal and obnoxiously obvious comparisons between Stanford and all things godly. Thankfully, the choreography was thoughtful and well-performed so as to supplement the respective songs and thus the narrative.

It's no secret that at the end of each Gaieties show, Stanford finds a way to trump those jealous Cal crazies, but this is also just a fact of life. "Gaieties 2010: The Last Temptation of Cal" sufficed in finding a clever way to present the classic tale of Stanford triumph. Be aware that one must enter knowing that one is likely to be confused, offended and bombarded by the trusty nude brood, all while not being able to hear much of anything – but again, that's Gaieties.

Gaieties makes its raunchy return

By [Marisa Landicho](#)



Over-sexed, over the top and overwhelming to the uninitiated, Gaieties is ready to make its rude (and lewd) jab at UC-Berkeley. Beginning Wednesday, Nov. 17, “Gaieties 2010: The Last Temptation of Cal” promises to top the Dalai Lama, if its trailer is to be believed.

The posters for this year’s show ominously read, “Blood in the fountains,” but otherwise the plot details have been kept secret, as is customary. But from Intermission’s sneak peek of the show, we can say that “The Last Temptation of Cal” lives up to its raunchy reputation.

Put on by the Ram’s Head Theatrical Society, the student-written, student-performed comedic musical dates back to 1911. Known for its winking insanity and unabashed nudity, Gaieties has made its bawdy skewering of Cal, and Stanford itself, a Big Game week tradition. The plot generally follows some version of bad Cal seizing, destroying and/or attacking Stanford, though each year the production tries to one-up itself in absurdity levels.

Particularly impressive this year is the comedic timing of the cast, starring Chris Lang ’11, Geffan Pearlson ’14, Phillip Bowen ’11, Alex Walker ’13 and Mary Beth Corbett ’12. The show is stocked with lines like, “I was taking a break from IHUM to, you know, save Stanford,” which land with precise delivery. The questionable accents and physical humor will win laughs, provided the blink-and-you-may-miss-it zingers don’t get swallowed by Memorial Auditorium.

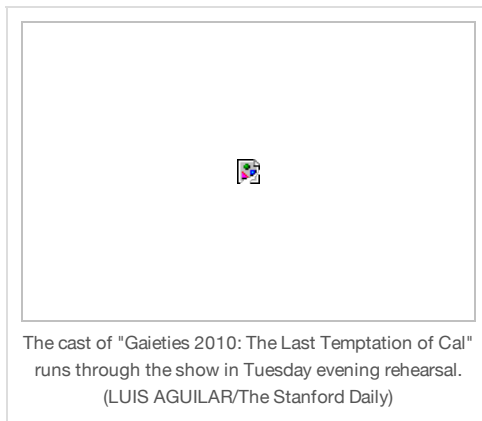
Gaieties, however, would be nothing without its script (just try and keep a straight face when one character muses, “That’s why my iPad pussy app was going wonkers.”). Gaieties’ all-student writing staff of 10, led by head writer Nick DeWilde ’10, began writing this year’s show last spring, while producer Rachel Lindee ’12 and director Emily Goldwyn ’11 made their edits through the summer. As of Tuesday’s rehearsal, lines were still being refined.

As usual, student groups, pop culture and Stanford quirks provide fodder for Gaieties’ fast-paced dialogue, with Greek organizations and a cappella groups bearing the brunt of the jokes this year. The production is one big inside joke, chock full of references to dining hall food, freshmen, chat lists, CoHo stink and those pesky abbreviations. And many of the characters are based on true stories, so if one of those actors looks familiar on stage, you know why.

The show itself is an exercise in attention splitting, as often the background hijinks are funnier than the main action. Rather than a generic chorus, the performers take on different campus characters during each scene for hilarious results. “Are you nursing? Keep that, I love that,” said director Goldwyn to one pair of industrious actors during rehearsal.

A show highlight, the requisite frat party scene is brilliantly choreographed. It’s worth going to multiple showings just to see what the entire cast gets up to on stage.

Yes, the show is offensive. Gaieties prides itself on its political incorrectness and “The Last Temptation of Cal,” is no exception. The racist jokes fly throughout the show (“Now go do math p-sets or take pictures in front of MemChu, or whatever your people like to do,” says one actor to his Asian



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accomplice). Consider it a mark of prominence if you or your student group is mentioned in Gaieties.

And then there's the nudity. For first-timers, the show is eye-opening in its rowdiness. At one point in rehearsal, Goldwyn sternly directed, "We need to have a make-out competition and you need to all win it." Suffice to say, the cast is prepared to take gold.

Catch the intellectual hedonism of "Gaieties 2010: The Last Temptation of Cal" Nov. 17-19 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for students and \$20 for adults.