

## 'Drawer Boy' pays attention to details: [www.heraldtimesonline.com](http://www.heraldtimesonline.com)

By Glenn Kaufmann  
H-T Reviewer  
2/22/2010

Shifting gears from the cast-heavy spectacle of "The Sound of Music," Cardinal Stage Company's Friday night opening of "The Drawer Boy" places just three characters in close-quarters conflict and slowly turns up the heat, allowing the careful revelation of details to sketch a harsh portrait of trust and truth for two lifelong friends.

Never have the details of life on the farm mattered as much as they do in Michael Healey's "The Drawer Boy." From the opening moments in which we watch Angus, a bear of a man, delicately slice the bread, mound on the peanut butter and gently daub the jelly as he prepares a PBJ sandwich, it's evident that in this story all of the pieces matter.

Angus and Morgan are two farmers who have worked the land of their rural Canadian farm together for 30 years. When Miles, a hopelessly eager college student from Toronto, arrives and asks if he can live on the farm and "just watch" them for a while as he gathers facts and details of their life for a play that he's writing, the delicate balance of life on the farm is shattered.

Morgan's response to Miles is, essentially, "You can work, but you can't just watch." Though they were introduced just moments before, Angus' response is "Who are you?" Clearly, Angus has some mental difficulties, but the extent and significance of those troubles isn't clear until later in the story.

What transpires from here on out is a series of both humorous and sad encounters between the three characters. Morgan tests and plays with Miles' head by getting him to perform all manner of bizarre and useless "real" farm tasks all in the name of experiencing life on the farm. For instance, Miles is asked to rotate the eggs out from under one chicken, placing them under another chicken (to keep the separation anxiety to a minimum when the time comes to sell the eggs).

As the particulars of Angus' disability become clear, the raw ingredients of Miles' play come into focus. It's a heartbreaking and wonderful story. But Miles is torn between telling a good story and hurting friends by saying too much.

Executed in Cardinal's signature high-gloss production style, the "farm" is wonderfully realized Chib Gratz's scenic design, and director Randy White's attention to character details and movement are what sells the story. Composed of David Cole (Angus), Ken Farrell (Morgan) and Harry Watermeier (Miles), "The Drawer Boy" ensemble does an amazing job of rendering the details of each character's life.

With its complex script, quality production values and rich multi-layered performances, "The Drawer Boy" thoughtfully reminds us that it is the details of life that ultimately define who we are.

If you go

WHAT: "The Drawer Boy," by Michael Healey. Running time: 1:45, with one 15-minute intermission.

WHO: Cardinal Stage Company.

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and March 4-6; 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and March 6.

WHERE: Waldron auditorium

HOW MUCH: \$12-\$24.50.

Ken Farrell, left, Dave Cole and Harry Watermeier star in "The Drawer Boy."  
Mike Price | Courtesy photo

