

The Medical Arts 16-17: Kidd Pivot + Electric Company Theatre's *Betroffenheit*
Anjan Saha's Experience

On Saturday, March 18th at 8:00pm, participants of the Medical Arts Program attended a performance of Kidd Pivot + Electric Company Theatre's *Betroffenheit*, followed by a Q+A and dessert reception with Jonathan Young, writer of *Betroffenheit*. Medical Arts Ambassador Anjan Saha describes his experience as follows:

"Coming to terms. We have all been shaped by experiences that have the capability of knocking us off our control oriented trajectories. Experiences that prompt us to ask the question, "why?" Unfortunately for us, that question can never be answered by anyone, except our respective selves. While *Betroffenheit* was created based on one man's traumatic experience of loss, sorrow, and grief, the larger concepts it illustrates are generalizable to anyone who immerses themselves in the performance. From the sounds that recreate the feelings of impending doom, to looks of horror that naturally materialize when confronted by a difficult situation, *Betroffenheit* very accurately depicts how random events can shake each of us to our core.¹



As an aspiring physician, I imagine clear cut explanations to irregularities in the way the human body responds to internal/external insults. Yet the stories that I hear from those who I aspire to be, paint a picture of outcomes that cannot always be rationalized. Even days later, I have continued to think about the significance of the performance, as there have been a few random life events that have since occurred that I am still trying to digest and that cannot

necessarily be rationalized. The difficulties associated with wrenches being thrown into an otherwise ordered landscape can be devastating, from death, to unwanted encounters, to reminders of skeletons that one would otherwise keep buried. Vulnerability becomes real, and you begin to feel powerless and weak.²



While *Betroffenheit* doesn't offer too many solutions to resolving powerlessness and vulnerability, it does offer a sense of consolation in demonstrating that we are not alone in our individual struggles. A sense of community, if you will, with regards to the wrenches that life decides to throw at us. While we cannot rationalize these wrenches, knowing

that others also experience similar irregularities allows us to maintain a sense of humanity and humility. These qualities thus help bring us closer together, collectively stronger and most importantly, more adept at coming to terms, an essential part of continued growth, development and success."

¹ Photo by Wendy D Photography

² Photo by Michael Slobodian

The Medical Arts Program is an initiative of Michigan Medicine at the University of Michigan.

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