

# Talented Williamston cast shines, despite complex 'Bowling' script

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Bowling ... Buffalo ... 1957 ... Irish Catholic: These four word clues can tell you everything you need to know about the Williamston Theatre's current show "While We Were Bowling," directed by John Lepard.

First off, for some reason bowling is simply a funny sport and even a funny word. If the play were called "While We Were **Golfing**, or "While We Were Playing Baseball," the title wouldn't be nearly as funny.

The McGlaughlin family is obsessed with bowling - and the number 808. That's grandpa's score that they are trying to break but never do. It also is their phone number, address and many other things.

Joseph Albright is engaging as the dad Melvin, a larger than life character who is always trying to fire up his family to beat that magic 808. He's full of energy, focused on all the quirky rituals you must do to win at bowling.

The story is told by Melvin's daughter Lydia. Wonderfully played by MSU theater student Kelly Studnicki, Lydia is a lovesick teenager who is enamored with a James Dean-type cool guy named Stickpin (Edward O'Ryan - also an MSU student).

Studnicki casually changes character with ease throughout the play - notably shifting from an intense scene to narration. For a young actress Studnicki is someone to watch.

This dysfunctional family keeps testing the boundaries - an alcoholic mother, gay son, black teenager living with the family, and a death. That's enough material to keep things going for a while.

It all takes place on a terrific, complex set by scenic designer Kirk Domer.

Disappointingly, there are often too many issues for the play to absorb easily. Many of the lines are witty and some downright funny. The **acting** is excellent, but there are so many tangential plot lines bouncing



around that the play loses intensity.

This production is done in collaboration with the MSU Department of Theater, and it was a delight to watch these talented young people. We also saw Tyler Van Camp and Ayo Obayan - all did excellent work.

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