

Q R O Q A G A N O A

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL

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SMACKDOWN! : DEBBIE DOES EINSTEIN

BY JULIE BLUMENTHAL

Give them a striptease. They'll swallow the poetry.
--T.S. Eliot, eds.

I feel for *Debbie*. I honestly do. It's so damn hot this summer, I'm perfectly happy to take off as many of my clothes as possible at the slightest opportunity. Like her, I am a poor, starving artist. Like her, I have exhibitionistic tendencies, insofar as I'd really like people to actually come see my work.

However, that is only because it is my work. If I choose my work on the basis of whether folks will come see it, it is not really my work anymore; it is the market forces.

My question is, what is *Debbie* thinking when she decides her story is perfect FringeNYC material? Is she thinking this is Grotowski's lost opus, or is she just a savvy PR chick who knows that if you sell out (principle), you'll sell out (tickets)? And what exactly does that make her show? Art, commerce???

Can one allow marketability to be a fundamental concern in choosing work without automatically "selling out"? As concerns FringeNYC, if a show goes up at the Festival, and no one sees it, does it make a sound?

In an effort to understand and determine whether I'm just a cynical nihilist who believes the overwhelming popularity of *Fear Factor* and *Temptation Island* spell the beginning of the end of the world, I consulted a few friends on the other side of the curtain, a critic and a press rep.

They concurred on the most important point of all: One said the Festival exists to "provide a forum, or laboratory, where artists and theatergoers can, together, take risks and fail and succeed and learn and explore", and the other added, "where else can we see so much interesting and original artistic non-commercial work?"

Which brings up a new question: does "commercial" even mean the same thing at the Festival, or does the Festival have its own unique set of market forces? Could *Debbie* even play Peoria in the first place? Myself, I would think so; I would assume tits are at least as popular there as they are 15 blocks from Chelsea. Still, whether *Urinetown* would be heading to the Henry Miller if the Festival hadn't provided a place for it to get its foot in the door is anyone's guess.

And are these popular shows what enable the Festival to give other slots to "high art?" As my press friend pointed out, "If I only saw artistically fulfilling work my head would explode. The entertaining shows allow me to relax and unwind, making me a better audience member for the serious stuff."

That's a beautifully inclusive viewpoint; I certainly hope it's true. But are these states truly so easily reconciled? As for myself, I can quote full sections of far too many *Friends* episodes than I'll ever admit, but I'll have to check the Nielsens because I don't think the increased ratings for "Big Brother" mirror an equivalent increase in viewership for those BBC Jane Austen adaptations, do they? It's true that for every *Debbie* in the Festival there's an *Einstein's Dreams*, a *Woyzeck*, a Gertrude Stein (and wouldn't Gertrude Stein and *Debbie* make an interesting lunch date?), or, for that matter, a "Something we've never heard of"; but it's also true that there are many more tickets still available for most of them.

"The person who sits down and decides what "kind" of art to make [in order to fulfill market demand] isn't really an artist", said one of my friends. And I'm not saying there's anything wrong with "frivolous" work. Still, why is there so much of this work? Why is so much of it proposed to the Festival? Why does so much of it get in? And why does it always sell out? And does, or doesn't, that last question answer the previous three?

Last year's massive sellout *Clowns in the Vagina* could have been the most aesthetically revelatory thing since Ben Jonson. (I don't know; I never got in to see it because it was always sold out.) This year, *Debbie* seems to be doing her best to hide her artistic revelation from us. Why? Does "Sex!" not quite have the same ring if you stick "and Iambic Pentameter!" after it.

"I think there's always a market for stuff that pushes the envelope in terms of shock value; i.e., nudity, sex, violence, etc. I think it has something to do with the way people have gotten desensitized to these things via TV and movies. I don't know if it's good or bad; but I think it's there", said my press rep. "People respond to what they're familiar with," my critic said. Granted, he was using the examples of *The Producers* and *Beauty and the Beast*, but what does it say about the state of the culture if those examples include anything violent, anything shocking, anything naked - as well as anything Disney?

Personally, I prefer my nudity with some Shakespeare, and vice versa. But if the audience doesn't agree, what am I to do? Even if I think Esperanto is the answer to the world's problems, there isn't much point in my speaking it, since I won't have anyone to talk to. And if I can get twice as many people to come see the lost works of Aeschylus by having Cassandra strip down, is that demeaning to my integrity as an artist, or is that twice as many people who've seen Aeschylus? Or is it both?

There's a famous FringeNYC myth about a director a few years back who proposed his "real" show, a work of divine artistic inspiration, which didn't get in, and his "safety" show: an all-male, gay-themed version of a classic, which did. Rumor had it he'd popped the safety in at the last minute because he knew it

would get in. I spent that Festival being catty and bitter, his show sold out every performance, and I have to admit a lot of people did get to hear some good Oscar Wilde.

So maybe it is possible to combine both. And maybe they restored the controversial nude scene to the Festival production of *Einstein's Dreams*, and added a mass gunfight to *The Nose*. Whether one could, or should, force High Art on an audience that doesn't want it, I don't know. Whether commercialism and aesthetic value can coexist in a capitalist society without one eating the other, I don't know. Still, the day someone goes to the mat for the artistic validity of *Survivor* is the day I turn in my hat.

And isn't this whole article a perfect example of the way the triumvirate of sensationalism, art and marketing works? How many times did *Debbie's* name get mentioned? Would you have picked it up if I called it "Woyzek vs. *The Nose*: Let's Get Ready to Rumble!"

Julie Blumenthal is a currently unemployed writer/director/producer. Her next show called *Eve's Place* runs at The Present Company Theatorium from September 10-25.

REVIEWS

Chelsea Murder Mystery

Written and Directed by Anthony Gelsomino

Lucky Devil Theatre Company

Theatre for the New City - Cabaret

Reviewed by John Jordan

Poor exposition. Overused jokes. Over-the-top characters and bad acting. Sounds like a typical, modern gay play to me. And, surprisingly enough, it is. Anthony Gelsomino's *Chelsea Murder Mystery* is not a horrendously awful play, but it's nothing that New York has not seen over the last several years in gay theatre. If I have to see one more Tinky Winky, the infamous gay, purple Teletubby, as a backdrop joke in a gay play, I'm going to...bite an apple. Okay, hold the presses. That was an example of just how bad the writing in *Chelsea Murder Mystery* is. There are so many one-liners that don't complete themselves. Many of the jokes just don't make sense. For example, Alex exclaims, "dating [blank] is like renting a movie you didn't like at the theatre." (It's a rough quote, not exact, but I think you get the idea.)

There are countless discrepancies, mistakes...ugggh!!!...things that just don't make sense and are therefore not funny. For example, Sam, the hustler stud, stands and sexily drinks a full bottle of water in one gulp. Then he belches. Now I don't know about anyone else, but water has never made me burp. Is this supposed to be funny? Well, it's not.

All the players (Alan Prewitt, Karl Gregory, Katrina Loncaric and Kurt Bauccio) are dancing around the stage trying to steal the show. Who does end up stealing the show is Sue Ellen, the play's hostess. She greeted us at the door and introduced each scene onstage with cue cards and a natural flair for comedy. (Note to actors: watch Sue Ellen...she doesn't try at all and gets results.) At the beginning of the final scene, as Sue Ellen was walking onstage to do her scene intro, the players onstage forgot about her and began TO ACT. That was just selfish.

The direction, also by playwright Anthony Gelsomino, is weak. Farce is very difficult to pull off well. It takes work. Hard work. I did not see the fruits of hard work. I just saw a bunch of caricatured fruits. (Hey, if they can use a box of Froot Loops onstage to get a cheap laugh...)

The only biological female in the play is Lucy, a needy, geeky, annoying woman (surprised?...well, it's a gay play and we can't have strong women, can we?). She sums up the play: "It's like some Chelsea Mad Lib." Unfortunately, the wrong people filled in the blanks to complete this non-entertaining tale.

Einstein's Dreams

Written by Ralf Remshardt, David Gardiner and Paul Stancato

Aporia Players and The Tobacco Bar

The Paradise

Review by Steven Kaplan

If your taste runs towards metaphysical rumination and Merchant-Ivory drag, if you need to think about the Big Picture, if your theater experience must be Apollonian, then *Einstein's Dreams* is for you. And judging from the sold out shows, its brand of tasteful, elevate discourse has struck a major chord with a significant segment of the FringeNYC audience.

Faithfully adapted from the 1993 novel by Alan Lightman, *Einstein's Dreams* brings us into the mind of the young Swiss postal clerk at that critical historical moment--when he was formulating his revolutionary Theory of Relativity and fast forwarding science into the 20th Century. What a moment for the young Albert! To realize that Time, that immutable

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REVIEWS (CONT)

constant of classical physics, was in fact variable, subject to particular conditions and applications.

Time was not a given. It could be bent, folded, warped, stretched. Second nature now to any Star Trek fan, but hardly conventional wisdom a century ago. Transfixed by these new possibilities for temporal dislocation, Einstein's fevered brain conjured up entire scenarios, alternative parallel universes based on different conceptions of Time. What if Time expanded at higher altitudes? Would people begin to build their homes on mountaintops and towers to add precious hours to their lives? What if Time moved backwards, so that a human life began with death and ended at birth? What if an entire lifetime was actually encapsulated in a day, so that one might be born at sunset, experience childhood and adolescence in the darkness of night, and only see light for the first time at the dawn of one's middle age? Would one's personality be determined by the time of birth? Bookish and introspective if born into darkness, only to discover the light later on? Carefree and physical if born into the light, only to be terrorized as one finds darkness in later life?

These speculations, and many others, are examined by an ensemble of actors elegantly clad in the summer whites and off-whites of 1905 Mittel Europa: formal shirts, starched collars and vests, suspenders, linen frocks, filigreed blouses. Their style of performance is mannered and carefully enunciated, but also highly athletic, incorporating elements of musical theater and dance. Working on an essentially bare stage and with few props, the actors themselves serve as the stage furniture, the backs and laps of some serving as footstools and seats for others. With each new dream they circle the stage, arranging their bodies in various arabesques and tableaux vivants, as one or more of them declaim the text--the rules of time for that particular dream, and its ramifications on human behavior. They speak anecdotally from Einstein's Zurich point of view, so often enough we are told to imagine one Frau X or Frau Y parading down Kunstgasse. It reminds us that many of the foundations of Modernism--not just Einstein but also Freud and Kokoshka and Dada--were a product of this haute bourgeois world before World War I blasted it all apart.

In this sort of intellectual theater, the actors are not playing individual characters, but different facets in the mind of one character. The writers, the director, the actors--all are trying to get inside Einstein's head. This can lead to a stylized, incorporeal preciousness. Perhaps it is easier or more natural for an actor to inhabit the physical presence of one character--a character with emotions, motivations, a character that sweats and screams--that a bloodless conception of Time.

Feast

Written and Directed by Scott Seraydarian

(in collaboration with the cast of Feast)

Lunch Productions

Theatre One-Ninety Six

Reviewed by John Jordan

Fire your Senses. Water your Vices. Air your Soul. Rule your Earth. This is what Lunch Productions' Feast asks of its audience. The concept is original, bold and adventurous. A house interactive cinematic experience is promised. Now it's not that the production does not come through on its promise. The major fault here is with the venue. A show like this should not be performed at Theatre One-Ninety Six. It was originally performed in a club, but since this is for FringeNYC, they got what they got.

But it's not just the venue issue. There are other factors weighing against this production. First and foremost, Scott Seraydarian has seriously miscast himself in a show with no real through-line. He plays the Dreamer, who is on a search to find himself? Mr. Seraydarian, along with several of the other cast members, cannot really carry a tune.

There is a short film (the cinematic part). The projection of this film was on such a small part of the back wall, that it was difficult to see most of it. I tried rearranging the audi-

ence members to get a better view, but perhaps the cast or crew should have been handling that. It is supposed to be interactive. I also thought I would try testing, if you will, the improv skills of the actors. As the show was getting ready to begin, the actors were bouncing around, saying hello, passing out small cups of punch. So I went up to one and said "Hey, do you know where I can find a good dealer?"...(the setting is supposedly like a club). I think this startled the actress, so she told me to ask someone else. Not so interactive.

The best parts of the performance were when the tribal music was on, the singing was not and they were dancing. The choreography was amazing. But the audience wasn't dancing. It's that horrible space.

The cast is fine. Full of energy and fun. It includes Corissa Ginsberg, Travis Kratt, Gene Manuel, Marla Mervis, Paul Soileau, Nikki Walker, Tasha Guevara, Tamara Wright, Michael Aquino, Mario Concepcion, Cria Merchant (who was understudying for Jamie Mazza-Marino) and Erin Stutland (the only real standout in the cast, especially during her Earth dance). The direction by Mr. Seraydarian is good, but not complete. Again, the best part is the choreography by Jennifer Ward.

If *Feast* ever continues again, in the proper setting, I'll be the first in line. I want this show to work.

Fifty Minutes

By Lucas Rockwood

Directed by Sherri Kronfeld

After Hours Productions

Henry Street Settlement - Recital Hall

Reviewed by John Jordan

On August 11, 2000, a young passenger on a Southwest Airlines flight in the USA was killed by eight other passengers after exhibiting air rage. Jonathon Burton, aged 19, became combative 20 minutes before Flight 1763 was due to land, hitting other passengers and pounding on the locked cockpit door. As many as eight of the plane's 120 passengers subdued him by kicking, beating and strangling him until he died. Lucas Rockwood's *Fifty Minutes* examines this happening.

There's not much I can say against the facts of the script. As the program notes, "Research was collected from the media coverage following this incident and special care was taken to sift through the media spin and misinformation that was reported. Any character portraits or opinions this production may relay should be recognized as fiction." However, I have a problem with fictional accounts based on real-life incidents. That's just how rumors and misinformation are spread.

The production itself was mediocre. The direction by Sherri Kronfeld was inventive and fun to watch. As we watch the events unfold (as "assumed" by Mr. Rockwood), we are interrupted by news correspondents, passenger testimonies, etc., for more exposition, then pick up where we left off on the plane. This is where the actors shined most. But, what actually shined most was one of the lights stage right. It was right on the stage floor and whenever on full, which was most of the first half of the 30 (not 50) minutes, it was blinding me. I actually had to put my sunglasses on at one point. Was I supposed to feel threatened? I was just annoyed.

The cast, Tigran Eldred, Jessica Faller, Raymond Hamlin, Guy Larkin, Mick Preston and Dawn Vicknair, was adequate. Ms. Faller was the most believable as the Flight Attendant. Mr. Hamlin who played the victim was powerful at times, but unconvincingly dramatic at others. I'm a stickler for details, and not one of the four actors typing on the keyboards even attempted to pretend to be actually typing.

The set was minimal and effective.

The message I got? I don't want to fly for awhile.

The Maids

Written by Jean Genet

Translated by Martin Crimp

Directed by Elizabeth Kilner Williamson

St. Marks Theatre

Reviewed by John Jordan

Why Jean Genet's *The Maids* continues to be produced is beyond me. The Maids was intended to "cut through nature," as French existentialist and playwright Jean Paul Sartre once said, "to expose femininity and masculinity for the social constructs they are." Genet intended the Maids and their Mistress to be played by men (actually the original idea was young boys). But times have changed. There is no need for that anymore, unless it's going to be camp all the way.

Genet portrays a ritualistic act of two maids (also sisters) who take turns acting as "The Mistress," abusing each other as either servant or employer. The ceremony reveals not only the maids' hatred of The Mistress' authority, but also their hatred of themselves for participating in the hierarchy that oppresses them.

Ken Matthews as the younger sister Claire and Eben Moore as Solange are both one note throughout the entire play. Emotional range does not an occasional shout make. Shouts that go unnoticed, it seems, to each other onstage, as there is no honest reacting. Dustin Tucker adds a bit of pizzazz with his role as The Mistress. But therein lies the problem. We have three male actors playing three female roles. The maids are playing their parts ambiguously in a dress, while The Mistress seems to be drag in a bucket. The fault truly lies with the direction, or lack thereof, by Elizabeth Kilner Williamson. The pace is painfully slow. Attention to detail was strongly lacking. As the maids finished "playing" with The Mistress' things, they needed to make sure everything was put back in its exact place. I didn't realize The Mistress kept the dust rag stationed at her make-up table. And I realize the phone is supposed to be off the hook for a while unnoticed (one of the many problems I have with the play itself), but all three actors looked right at it several times, though nothing was said or done, because it wasn't time in the script yet. It became the play about the phone off the hook.

This production of Martin Crimp's translation wants to proceed for something, but then pulls back, then tries again. This continues throughout. Kind of like two steps forward, one step back, which might be a nice dance, but there's no music here. There's no ballet. There's no tempo. I'm not even suggesting that camp is the way to go. I am suggesting that a production at least decide to go somewhere. This one does not.

Last Laugh

By Brandon Firla, Kurt Firla, Daniela Lama, Cyrus Lane and Wolfgang Bueller

Directed by Wolfgang Bueller

Musical Direction by Michael Barber

Canned Laughter Entertainment

Henry Street Settlement - Recital Hall

Reviewed by John Jordan

Fabulous! Fabulous! Fabulous! Okay, so that's sounds a bit gay, or happy. But so what? This play is phenomenal!

From the moment the lights go up for *Last Laugh* to the final "curtain," there is non-stop comedy, improv, heartfelt crooning, dapper dancing and an overall feeling of love filling the HSS Recital Hall. We begin at the Canasta Club. New York City, 1949. Ralphie Fenster introduces the Rumoli Brothers from Schenectedy. We hear a tune by the lovely Francesca King. Once the boys' act is over, we get on to the story. Benny is infatuated with hot dogs, the name Doug and Gina Molina, a Hollywood starlet. Rick and Francesca are an item. Rick wants to take a break to run off to Atlantic City with Fran. Enter Biggerton LeGrand, who has seen the show and offers the boys a gig in Boston. They can't refuse. Time alone with Fran is put on hold. The boys then go to Chicago, where they are seen by Hal Henry. He sends them to Hollywood. As their careers flourish, Fran feels neglected and despondent. There's more, but you have to see it for yourself. I stress "you have to see it."

The entire cast is incredible. Brandon and Kurt Firla (brothers in real life, I assume) play Rick and Benny Rumoli, respectively. It's amazing how in tune with each other these two are. Brandon has a superb singing voice. Kurt is off-the-wall hilarious. Daniela Lama, who plays Francesca King, has one of the most effective voices/presence I have seen to date. First, her rendition of "Someone To Watch Over Me" sent chills through me. I'm not sure of the origination or title of her second number (I'm guessing the title is "One Man That Got Away"), but she sang this while Rick was away. So much emotion. Amidst all this outrageous slapstick, I was crying. A truly remarkable performance. Cyrus Lane has perhaps the most difficult job of juggling the rest of the onstage characters. He did so with zest. Benjamin Toth (Fingers) plays the piano wonderfully.

The direction by Wolfgang Bueller is what really brings this whole weenie roast together (no pun, just see the show and you'll understand). Movement, transitions, sound, lights, pace...all top notch.

Bravo!!!

Life's Call

Written by Arthur Schnitzler
Translation by Ryan Suda & Greg Vargo
Theater et al
The Paradise
Review by Jennifer Heit

Whether or not this play is a must see or a steer clear, depends. Written in 1905 by Arthur Schnitzler, who also authored *Eyes Wide Shut* and the *Blue Room*, *Life's Call* continues on the same noteworthy path, zigzagging far away from more commercially acceptable theater.

theater et al is presenting the play for the first time in the United States since 1926, at the Paradise Theatre where a sparse decor seems appropriate to the modernistic approach of this intensely acted story.

Purists may find the abstract presentation detracts from the play's plot. This modern translation of *Life's Call* takes on attributes of ancient Greek theater, where actors spoke from podiums. Instead, picture frames and lights hang from above to highlight each actor. An interesting contrast.

Dialogue sometimes overlaps as actors direct their lines toward the audience rather than to each other. Despite this approach to auditory interaction, physically they touch each other in obvious, yet nonexplicit displays of sexuality.

The three acts are separated by short blackouts. There is no intermission during the roughly 80-minute play.

Actors maneuver around the stage in gymnastic-like choreography. Movement is fast and furious with many thumps, as they climb walls, run across the stage and around each other in a synchronized show of athletics. The actors' physical fitness and the precise direction works together to pull it off well.

Costuming is simple and easy on the eyes, a monotone palate of gray, black and white. This adds to the play's modern feel, helping the audience concentrate on the movement symmetry of the actors. Some costume changes were done on stage, enhancing the audience dynamic.

Technical details of the microphones on stage and those used by the actors might also benefit from some fine tuning, judging by noted volume unevenness in the opening night performance. Some actors oorally outshout others.

The actor's mechanics overshadows the plot, which is rife with sexual tension and the threat of violence, at least recognizable themes to life and theater even if their expression is not. One actor handheld a light to follow other actors as they moved around the stage. Individual movements coordinated well.

Slippers could be added to the costume ensemble out of concern for the actor's health, or the stage should be swept. Throughout the performance, their feet became more and more dirty. Clean freaks may have a problem with this.

This play requires thought and energy from audience members. Those looking for prime

time entertainment won't find it here and shouldn't try. Then again, unusual theatrical expression is what the Fringe is all about. It does pay to remember that obscurity isn't necessarily art, and vice versa.

Those attending *Life's Call* will enjoy it most if they view it as an experiment. Sex and death is as hot today as it was in 1905. In this current *Life's Call*, it just takes a different spin.

Misfit

By Patrick Dugan
Directed by Paul Mazza
The Present Company/The Iron Theatre Company
The Paradise Theatre
Reviewed by John Jordan

Patrick Dugan's *Misfit* has a promising premise, a story that needs to be told, but it needs to be told in a manner that works. This doesn't. The body of eight-year-old Michael Lyons is found mutilated and sexually assaulted. Exposition is given to us repetitively via the company, spread around the stage. This is quite effective and sets the mood, at first, but then we start to hear the same things sometimes five or six times over. Suspecting eyes turn to high school senior Wayne Crowley, since he wears only black, practices Wicca (a form of witchcraft) and listens to heavy metal.

The production is comprised entirely of both current and graduate theatre students of Fordham University. With the exception of Elizabeth Miller (Abigail, Wayne's girlfriend), all the players have been miscast. Liz Santine (Detective Charlotte Van Houten) seems to be in a different play with each scene. When questioning Brian, played way over-the-top by Jon Crane, at first she seems motherly. Then she's Mrs. Robinson. Ms. Santine does have a few nice moments, but it's only when she's working one-on-one with Ms. Miller, who gives her an honest, heart-wrenching performance to react to. Rounding out the cast are Jill Creighton, Joe Galan, Paul Hagen and Richard Prioleau, Jr.

The direction by Paul Mazza seems to be innovative and imaginative, but looking at the whole picture, there are major flaws. After the suspect is questioned, the others form the Wiccan symbol with police tape underneath the detective and Wayne, trying desperately to convince her to arrest Wayne. "Become one of us," they demand of her. She does. She kills Wayne. What is most bothersome about this scene is that Abigail is part of the conspiracy. I was under the impression she loved Wayne and believed he was innocent. When did she change her mind? Why has she joined the lynch mob? It makes no sense. There is nothing in the script that suggests she has "crossed over," leaving this to be a directing issue. And I have never seen a detective touch and rearrange a crime scene as much as I did watching *Misfit*. Small-town police are not that incompetent.

The set, lighting and costumes are adequate.

Movement Zoo

Fouregraphers
University Settlement
Review by Yam Pashkovetzki

For the millions of people who hate dance (because it's the most abstract of all art forms) I recommend this show, created by Fouregraphers, a group of talented, whimsical NYU dance graduates.

They've taken their extensive ballet training and use it to develop pieces that are more physical comedy and dance theater than straight "dancey dance",---some pieces have little movement at all---and so even if you loathe dance, you're bound to enjoy most of what's here.

Still, the show is spotty and uneven because there are four different choreographers creating separate pieces.

The star of this team is Chris Elam, who reminds me of a crazier Freddie Mercury, and his pieces could be dance versions of Queen anthems: muscular, aggressive, creative, funny, and sometimes beautiful. Much of his stuff feels like heavy metal Glam rock and he's an extremely strong performer, dancer, and choreographer. His opening piece, "All Of Me" featured jittery, queer (as in peculiar), and intense moves by himself and the equally powerful and precise Justin Barnett, while his "inabable" felt like a dance piece by Dr. Seuss (with an influence of Pilobolus it seemed).

The other 3 choreographers have a harder time keeping up with Elam's exacting and edgy work, but they had some cute oddities, like "The Lonesome Lighthouse" (where Justin Jones is dressed as a 9 foot tall lighthouse with an actual spinning light on his head, singing a duet with Chris Yon) and "A View From The Pool" (Jennifer Harmer's harsh comic quintet of exaggerated swimmers and an imbecile lifeguard).

An easy hour of "dance" if you're inclined.

Shopping for shows:

ticket prices:

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All tickets are general admission \$12

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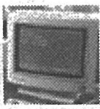
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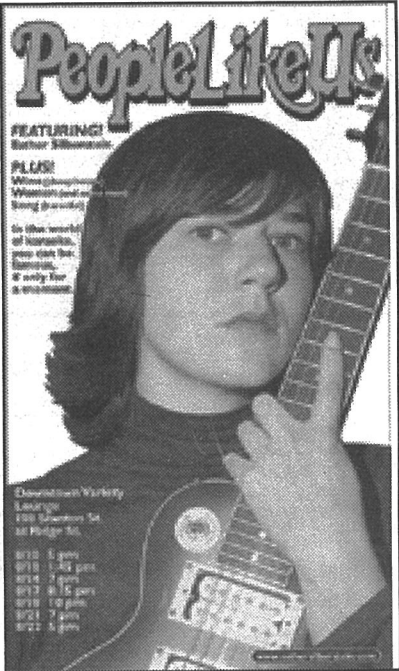
outside NY 1-888-FringeNYC
in person (cash or credit card)
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day of show

In person (cash only)



at performance venue
15 minutes before showtime



Perhaps I've Hatched

Conceived, Created and Performed by Michael Carbonaro

Trickster Productions

The Red Room

Reviewed by John Jordan

Honestly, I've never been a big fan of performance art. Until now. All thanks to Michael Carbonaro and his solo theatrical experience, *Perhaps I've Hatched*. Hey, perhaps I have hatched?

He's one part magician, one part mime and a whole lot of funnyman. He's got stage presence and charisma flowing off the charts. This is definitely someone to look out for.

This, his latest creation, includes his trademark act, Foam Faces, where he takes the audience on a visual journey from youth to old age, innocence to evil, death to rebirth and man to monkey...all with a can of shaving cream. Even though he began this bit with the traditional "don't try this at home," I almost want to break out the Barbisol and relive the experience.

It's not just that he does great impressions or groovy illusions, he does them with style. He knows how to work an audience. The performance I attended was a Sunday matinee, and there were less than 10 of us in the theatre. And we all felt the love. He invited us into his strange, little world. And we wanted to be there. It was almost as if he was with us, not just performing for us. A truly, unique and extremely satisfying experience.

The lighting and music were awesome. The set was basically Michael Carbonaro. There were a few chairs and some props here and there, but it's all him.

I don't want to give a rundown of everything he did, because you need to experience it for yourself. I stress "need." Who knows, perhaps you will hatch as well. Catch this show while you can.

Time Out

By Cailin M. Harrison

Directed by Courtney Selan & Yolande Yorke-Edgell

Pandora Productions (UK)

St. Marks Theatre

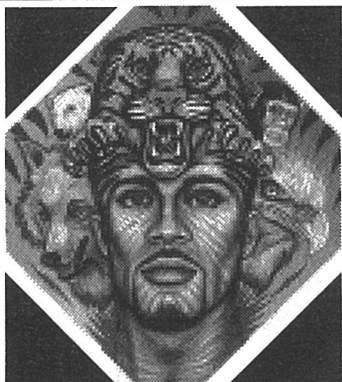
Reviewed by John Jordan

Every once in a while there comes along a theatre production overflowing with talent. Pandora Productions' staging of Cailin M. Harrison's *Time Out* is one of those productions. Every moment onstage is satisfying. This fine group of actors provides the audience a nice escape. It was so nice to sit back and thoroughly enjoy each and every actor's performance. The direction by Courtney Selan and Yolande Yorke-Edgell brings them all together.

First up is Timothy Holland, played beautifully by Shepard Koster. Mr. Koster does not have any scenes with the other actors. He is not even in the same country as the others. We only see him throughout the play alone at a pub, always with a drink in hand, telling a stupid office joke (he can probably make you laugh with "Why did the chicken cross the road?"). His accent is flawless and he plays drunk like a natural born Betty Ford Clinic alumni. Jennifer Flanagan plays his wife Kat. Not only is she a natural talent and a natural beauty, but she makes it look so easy. Acting, that is. Marla Schultz plays Joyce Frank so naturally, so splendidly, I want to hang out with her. Her timing is impeccable. She draws you in and it's hard to not watch her. Always on. Always ready to react. Always ready to give something to react to. Derik Ban Derbeken plays her business-first husband, Stephen. Chas Mitchell plays the sailboat captain, Evan Jennings. He's smooth. Rounding out the cast is Brett Elliott as Tommy Morris. He is another one to watch. I am sure we will be seeing a lot of him. Keep your eyes open for this very attractive, very talented actor. (I know looks have nothing to do with talent, but this is such an attractive cast, it had to be mentioned.)

I'm not entirely sure what the message is, or if there even is one. This is basically an example of actors taking some flat characters and giving them...hmmmm...character. Perhaps with some writing adjustments (keeping the same cast, of course), *Time Out* has the potential to be a truly great piece of entertainment.

The actors and director used the space the best they could. The set, costumes and lighting worked well. I believed they were on a sailboat. Not an easy task.



RAPTURE

written by Noyah Einav
directed by Nina Morrison

"It's the end of the world so where's my dealer..."

Theater for the New City-Cino Theater
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Valentino

Words, Book & Music by Gail Morgan

Directed by A Kernaghan and Gail Morgan

The New Australian Theatre Company

Henry Street Settlement - Harry De Jur Playhouse

Reviewed by John Jordan

Rudolph Valentino is and always will be known as "the world's greatest lover." The New Australian Theatre Company brings to the 2001 Fringe Festival a two-act original play with original music entitled *Valentino*. Written by Gail Morgan, this venture into the past is ambitiously original. It doesn't try to copy Broadway musicals. It doesn't try to copy old Hollywood. What it does do is entertain.

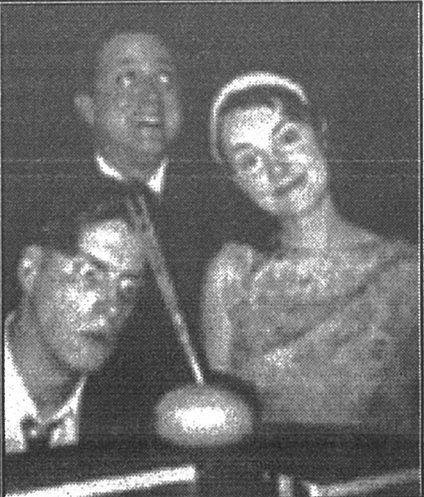
Rudolph Valentino defines the Roaring Twenties. Born in 1895 in Italy, he was one of the most magnetic and charismatic stars of the silent screen. But what really happened to him? Was he gay? Was he a bigamist? Was he a murderer? Was he murdered? He wants to know. So he sets out to find these answers.

Robert Martin plays Rudolph Valentino with sophisticated allure. Though his accent was a bit too British, and his voice projected a deep resonance, I was drawn to his performance. (I was led to believe Mr. Valentino had quite a high-pitched voice.) Angelina Elkin plays Natacha Rambova, perhaps Mr. Valentino's one true love, with fun energy. When she was not onstage, I missed her. Finally, Victor Kline plays George Sidney Ullman, Mr. Valentino's personal business manager, as well as Mr. Valentino's first wife, Jean Acker. When he briefly plays the part of Ms. Acker, he does not need a wig or a costume change, he just does it. And he's very funny. And very real.


The music is witty and sophisticated, and all three players handle it with elegance.

The costumes are magnificent, with the exception of Mr. Kline's footwear. I think they were Dr. Martens, and since they were created in 1960, I do not believe it to be too fitting for the Valentino era. Both Ms. Elkin and Mr. Martin were ravishing in their black tuxedos for Act I. Act II had Ms. Elkin redefine elegance à la Norma Desmond. Simply beautiful was she.


The stage was bare, except for a piano draped with a black and white material that completed the perfect picture of the past we were taken to.



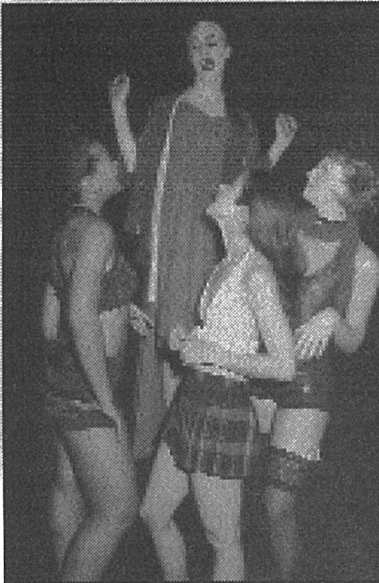
AT HOME WITH THE NIXONS



LIFE'S CALL



CHARLIE'S ANGEL



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