

African Folk Tales with Eric de Waal**YAP Theatre—Kids Venue SCD**

Eric de Waal is back for yet another year of entertaining kids of all ages. As always, he opens by describing a character he likes to call 'tocolosh' (hoping I spelled it right), and engages the audiences before leaping into his first tale.

This year he tells us about the events following a little girl pulling a monkey's tail, using enormous amounts of audience participation and his famous animal puppets. His second tale is the story of a couple who are to be wed.

A slightly more mature story, it is still perfect for all audiences, with less audience participation than the first. This story depicts a short and trying time for the young couple. As always, this barefoot dynamo is certainly a favorite and a must-see for families with kids (or kids-at-heart adults).

*Arden Pruden***The Guitar Teacher****Randy Rutherford Presents—Exchange Church**

In this year's offering, Randy Rutherford explores a relationship most of us can relate to—the student and the teacher.

From their first meeting, Grant, the golden-haired troubador and teacher, seems like he has a "spotlight following him," and sheds that light on the impressionable, eager Rutherford on all aspects of being...

What to drink? Guinness Stout at room temperature. How to learn finger picking on the guitar? Tell your fingers what you want them to do. How much to practice? 10,000 hours each step!

It is a happy thing for the audience that Rutherford is up to the task of faithfully following his mentor's advice. His exploration of the complexities of love relationships in many forms weave an absorbing and evocative tale. His characterizations always ring true and they invite his audience to journey along on an enchanting, musical trip.

The joy of being the minstrel to his mentor, and his mentor's love, the beautiful and "almost perfect" Lady Cassandra, shines through. It is the less than perfect aspects of these relationships that makes them so endearing and human.

Rutherford evokes, with compassion and wonder, how being a witness (musically or otherwise) to such love is like falling in love oneself.

Kudos to Rutherford for overcoming the venue's limitations and performing with his usual grace, professionalism and humour. And of course great music!

Go see this play.

*L. Brooks***The Fringe Family Fun Show****The Comedy Illusions of Greg Wood—Argue Bldg.**

For the second year in a row, I have enjoyed this couple's magical family show. Not having many opportunities to see magic shows in Winnipeg, we were glad to see that Greg Wood and his wife returned to the Fringe this year.

We went back to their show where we were wowed by the magic tricks and thoroughly entertained by the jokes and 'patter' throughout the show. The floating table was a real crowd pleaser and my family especially enjoyed seeing money come out of my child's nose!

Greg is a funny, talented guy. I recommend this show to anyone, children and adults, young and old!

*Milt Brandon***Grand-Guignol on the Prairie****Echo's Little Theatre—Ragpickers**

The 5-member cast of Echo's Little Theatre return with a second set of three short plays from the French Theatre of Horror written in the early 1900's. I really enjoyed last year's show, and the new plays are a good mix with one each of a horror, a comedy and a drama

They do a great job of keeping the audience entertained with some really good musical interludes during the scene changes. You know a show is going to be good when you see a full sized guillotine on the stage—and that was for the comedy piece!

The entire cast do a great job and make for a great theatre experience.

Murray Hunter

This is another great show that has a particular appeal. If you saw last year's production, you will know what I mean. Echo Theatre presents three short plays—two horror tales, and a comedy with a horror twist. Musical interludes separate the plays as the actors scramble to replace sets from behind a curtain. It's done in 19th century melodramatic style. Not everyone is going to like this style of theatre, so be forewarned.

Regardless of your taste in theatre, you should appreciate the top-drawer acting and direction. Each script is a minor masterpiece. The musical interludes are highly entertaining and effectively fill the void between plays.

This year's show does not use as much broad humour as last year's, but I would say that overall the quality is better.

*Kevin Longfield***When Harry Met Harry****Flaming Locomotive Prods.—MTC Up the Alley**

Alan Girod is a master of movement, every part of his body conveys the emotions of our repressed anal office worker Harry.

He lives for his job until he loses it and we are left optimistic that now that his routine has changed, so has his chance to really live and maybe even love.

A hilarious, touching exquisite production. Another gem from the performer of *The Good Thief*.

And he's a Jenny fan, he reads this.

Lisa Campbell

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