

Grimmer Than Grimmer Than Grimm **RabbitRepublic Theatre Company—Gas Station**

Like a certain beer sold in the beer tent, those who like this show will like it a lot. I wouldn't recommend the show to children or people with tender sensibilities, but for the more adventurous theatre fans this show really rocks. The crowd, as they say, went wild. Like the Grimms brothers' tales that inspired this show, there is a serious intent behind all the mayhem which even the broad humour does not completely hide.

The performers were all great, but an unseen fifth Ribbit was technician, Todd Drader, whose work in the booth really enhanced the show.

Kevin Longfield

The Chip

White Rabbit's Prods.—MTYP

White Rabbit's production of *The Chip*, although not the big production of past Fringe Festivals, is a thoroughly enjoyable and engaging play. The dialogue is so real and honest that the audience is drawn into the story immediately.

The set design is particularly clever as it quickly transforms from a police cruiser to a living room and back.

All three performers do an exceptional job, and play their roles with passion, commitment and integrity.

I thoroughly enjoyed the one hour show. It is well worth the short trip to MTYP. This is an excellent fringe play that will quite likely spark an interesting discussion, if not debate, among your fellow fringers. Imagine, theatre that makes you think!

Richard Ball

Daydream

Cultural Imaginary Prods.—MTC Up the Alley

Performers Max Arnaud and Pamela Paul create a realistic tension as mother and son, both simmering with unrealised dreams, simultaneously relying upon and repulsed by each other. From the very beginning, it's clear that this cheery living room is going to explode, and the story does not disappoint. This is a tale of a frustrated man who falls into a certain creative insanity—not because of a video game, but because years of personal suppression lead him finally to suppress the idea of reality itself.

The piece had its difficulties; the writing in places is a little awkward, with occasional dialogue that seemed almost stilted and there were certain repetitious lines that could have been cut to move more clearly from one idea to the next.

However, the taut, poised performances of the two actors more than compensated. Paul is especially skillful with moments of terror, conveying extraordinary panic while unable to speak, while Arnaud

walks a thin line between scary and likeable.

"The enemy greets you, not with a weapon, but a handshake." That line pretty well summarizes an important idea in *Daydream*. Social alienation, the divide between private thoughts and worldly experiences, and the pressure created when stagnation and repression collide, are also themes addressed by this challenging show.

It would be oddly trivializing to assign a star rating to this play or talk about how I liked it; it's not a cheerful show, and you'll likely leave the theatre thinking, not whistling. There is definitely something here worth seeing.

Lindsay Labanca

The Pig of Happiness

Big Empty Barn—Playhouse Studio

You are greeted at the door by the friendly performer, who continues to develop his rapport with the audience by hopping on stage and serenading them while he chats and asks questions. He combines the story of his past with charming musical interludes in his beautiful singing voice.

The reason for the title is that he likens his newfound happiness to a small piglet that continues to grow into a pig as his happiness expands.

He first finds his piglet of happiness after quitting his mundane job at Euro-Disney in Paris after eight years. Along the way, we are treated to scenes from his life and songs sung in his magnificent voice. Worth seeing.

Lisa Campbell

Celebrity Cult

Black Sheep Theatre—Playhouse Onstage

This play nails down the inane, superficial world of celebrity news shows like E!talk and Entertainment Tonight.

Two actors, Jayson McDonald and Meghan Brown brilliantly and hilariously portray a celebrity parade with several dead-on characterizations. We meet the wacky stalkers, hotel clerks who try to act anonymous, models with their products, washed up actors, uncaring agents, over-blown talk show hosts, pestering paparazzi, and all the hangers-on that orbit the celebs. Entertaining from start to finish, and the audience thoroughly enjoyed the media mayhem. Nothing to not like about this gem.

Lisa & Kevin Campbell

Fake Life

No Snowcones—The Conservatory

This is a boy meets girl story. This couple have been life long friends, confidants, and, yes, lovers. Neither seems to want to commit to anything, other than to talking about each other's life problems.

He is a desperate, jilted man, yet portrayed in a funny way; she is a pixieish bundle of energy, not knowing what she wants from life, let alone from him.

We follow their history from past to present. There is a great scene when they both go clubbing, and lean on each other, in hilarious dance gyration, hoping to pick up some one.

The only thing I had a problem with was that while they were cuddling and talking, they were lying very close to the front of the stage. While you could hear the dialogue, you couldn't see them and the wonderful playfulness and closeness this couple were trying to convey.

Nice little romantic comedy

Kevin Campbell

WOW.

Oh, you want more detail? Wordplay enthusiasts and "nice guys" will especially love this show because this is your life, but more so. The theme of unrequited love is absolutely universal, so folks both young and old will identify.

I laughed. I cried. I laughed so hard, I cried, then cried because I was laughing. And then I gave it a standing ovation. Bottom line, go see this show. It is brilliantly written, superbly acted and tightly paced. Solid gold.

Dan Augusta

The Shadowy Waters

Eternal Rose Theatre—MTC Up the Alley

A time out of time! At the beginning, the Black Jester tells the cast and audience that he is going to take them on a dream journey, and he does. The atmosphere created by the words and visuals was mesmerizing, as if one had entered into a dream, and once there we followed the cast on the dream journey they created. A truly wonderful experience!

Jim Kacki

Little Dickie Milburn

Da B'ys Players—Playhouse Studio

Here's a hidden gem and one of my top picks so far.

It looks like a one-man show from the program. Instead, a very talented cast of four brings us the tragic tale of Dickie Milburn and his unfaithful wife. Hilarious for us, but heartbreaking for the eternally optimistic and trusting hero.

A narrator speaks and sings the story with a beautiful voice, and charms with guitar and mandolin, as he interacts with the audience.

At only half-an-hour, it is an excellent filler but you should be seeing it anyway.

Fantastic!!

Lisa Campbell

