

It's Raining in Barcelona

Bundle of JOY Prods.—MTC Mainstage

There's lots of buzz about this one, with good reason.

I loved the fresh script by, Paul Miro, translated from the original Spanish.

Everyone plays their part to a tee. The crude, live-in lover, Carlo, is sooo base, hiding under the bed as his woman prostitutes herself above; and who thinks eating at McDonald's three times a day is heaven. Lali, the prostitute, yearns for knowledge, has a huge heart, and an attitude towards sex that is definitely not starchy North American style. David, the nerdy gentle john, is so accepting and encouraging to Lali's yearning for better things, that he somehow wiggles his way into Carlo's and Lali's life.

Anyone wanting a superbly acted fresh new drama should see this one. Bravo!

Lisa Campbell

Mother of Invention

6—Rachel Browne Theatre

While this show has many merits—most notably Charla Ramsey's physical performance, Brian Longfield's live "soundtrack" on guitar, and the excellent masks and robot design—it suffers from several small flaws, each one a minor drawback, but cumulatively weakening the work.

A robot comes to a city on a quest for information about its maker. It encounters a mother seeking her child, and those two stories combine into one.

The greatest weakness is possibly in the video editing. Establishing shots stretch on too long, especially at the beginning, lending the naturally, leisurely "silent movie" format an even greater slowness. It feels as if tightening the video would cut as much as ten minutes off the show without losing any of the story's impact.

Having a live actor interact directly with the video is an interesting conceit, but it feels oddly gratuitous

in all but a few cases. The early scene of the robot scanning around itself on the bridge, and two "dance" sequences (one from the climax of the play), are the only places where it seems to be used in a way that couldn't be managed by video alone.

The choreography of the dances seemed good but not great, lacking the energy usually found in dance pieces.

However, a personal peeve is the "twist ending" which is not only a twist but THE twist, the one that is by far the most common twist ending in existence harking right back to ballads, and probably, cavemen.

It can be done well—and the dance is rather affecting—but only if there is enough substance to carry such an old ending, and I'm not sure they have it.

Lenora Rose

Roses

Racket Rock—Conservatory

This one-man play is a series of sketches, all tying into the theme of roses in some way. They are mostly very well done, but Jordan Stewart needs a helper, as scene changes were too long, making the audience restless.

There are many entertaining scenes. His Axle Rose imitation was cute, as was his nerd making a dating service video who manages to say every scary thing a woman never wants to hear.

Lisa Campbell

Pitch Blond

Destination Ink Prods.—Son of Warehouse

This is an interesting and well-performed show that somehow I couldn't quite get into. I know it's been extremely well-reviewed and the word of mouth on it is also very good, but I ended up feeling like it was a good, solid sort of show rather than a must-see, as I had repeatedly heard and read it described.

I went with my mother, who thinks my relative lack of enthusiasm might be partly a gender thing. The main focus of the play is Judy Holliday's testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee, in the McCarthy era. To make a long story short, Holliday—a woman with an extraordinarily high IQ—dealt with the HUAC by playing the same sort of dumb-blond character she played in her movies rather than displaying her true intellectual gifts.

This was very clever of her—I especially liked her big "anti-communist" speech, which is really a thinly veiled attack on the HUAC itself (not to mention the tea partiers of today)—but that's about it. Perhaps I'm not connecting with this emotionally in the way the play expects me to. You might have a different reaction, one that makes this a must-see show for you; but it is, in any case, a very good one.

Jeff Heikkinen

The Chip

White Rabbit Productions Inc.—MTYP

This play was utterly captivating from the word 'go'. Never did I anticipate the range of thoughts and emotions I would experience in this 60-minute adventure!

The concept seems simple enough—an outside-looking-in view of what life would be like if every one on earth was required to have an all telling chip implanted in their body.

But the writers took this relatively simple concept, and utilized the fabric of the stories they wove through their characters to allow our own questions of what's right or wrong—and moral or immoral—to emerge.

The ensemble cast of Chelsea Rankin, Murray Farnell and Shawn Kowalke did a phenomenal job at bringing this original work to life, as their characters went through a range of moral decisions and interactions in all directions that kept me wondering, "What would I have done if that were me?"

A MUST-see at the 2010 Fringe.

Scott Jones

all the best!
to the **fringe & the jenny**



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