

Mr. Crumple's Puppet Pad**Wisheweres—MTC Up the Alley**

What's not to love? You get really cute puppets and you get to see Steve McIntyre in person, instead of on TV or in film. He gets the only human role and his loud gravelly voice is perfect for the fallen, debauched Mr. Crumple as he tries to make a comeback with his kids' show. The mood is set by having us listen to the theme songs that formed all our favourite childhood shows. The puppetry by both Dave and Dan was a joy to watch, particularly the latter. The cast gave very professional and relaxed performances. The puppet Cherry Ontario (Hannah Montana-ish) alone is worth the ticket price. Don't get the impression that this is a show for children, the mature label is warranted. A thoroughly entertaining 45 minutes with lotsa laughs.

*Lisa Campbell***Interruptions****Archetype Productions—Playhouse Studio**

We felt strongly that you should know this play is not the dismal show you might suspect by just reading the program.

We had lost our beloved granddaughter at birth just a month ago so we felt we had to see this for ourselves and pre-screen it for our son and his wife. We were pleasantly surprised to find that the playwright/actress managed to deal with this heart-breaking material and yet include humour frequently.

There was a parade of recurring characters, though we couldn't understand why her tiny costume changes—a shawl, sweater, etc.—took so long.

The leisurely changes while presenting such heavy subject matter left lengthy, awkward silences which we both found annoying and uncomfortable. Her delivery is smooth and easy, however, and she was a pleasure to watch.

Everyone will encounter someone who has lost a child and this show is very informative as



Photo Credit: Diverse.com

Cherry Ontario, Mr. Crumple & Gordito are all in Mr. Crumple's Puppet Pad; but which one do you trust?

to how handle this tricky yet sensitive subject. But the show also deals with various views on becoming pregnant: happiness, disappointment, regret, and shame, for example. So don't let one part of the subject matter dissuade you from attending this show.

*Lisa Campbell***Lizardboy****Whimsical Productions...—Rachel Browne Th.**

A brilliant show by a talented and dedicated performer, though not for the faint of heart. Victor Gomez tells the story of a child whose life is riddled with violence and an absent and harsh father, who lives in a world of fear. He has asthma, and in keeping with this year's Big Top Fringe theme, his torment is manifested in evil clowns and circus music. This is a well thought-out piece that is relevant and reaches into your soul, into the tender places that relate to childhood experience and growing up with violence. The central character is well conceived.

Lizardboy is a story told in an exotic and volatile setting, a city in Colombia where a 9-year-old boy grows up among street violence, often dodging shootings. Gomez draws you into this vulnerable

world. A child with likes and dislikes, a child who enjoys icecream, and eating peanut butter with a toy sword. It's a world where his reaction to violence—both domestic and street—is acted out with toys such as a large Rhino crushing pop cans, with spinning tops and lights flashing from sirens to hint at the relentless sense of urgency in this boy's life. This monologue is beautiful to behold.

It does get long in a very dark theatre. But there is some joy in this boy's life, and it's especially evident in his costume and superhero Lizard Boy. The boy sees himself as a lizard with special powers. The actor took care to embody that physically.

This is a peek into the mind of a child. Gomez is a crafty storyteller. He knows this little boy inside and out, even down to the records he listens to. The reference to KISS made it real and gave a clue that this boy grew up in the 80s. I recommend seeing it at a time of day when you're most alert. It is spellbinding.

*Yvette Jones***Rogue Cop****Fallis & Ball's Productions—Warehouse**

This show is a send-up of 1980s cop shows. Given the logistics of rehearsals, I really admire anyone who can mount a large-cast production at the Fringe. Fallis and Ball's Productions largely pull this caper off. The writing is very clever, and the staging provides lots of great sight gags. The cast are all enthusiastic and deliver their lines with conviction.

On the down side, the performers did not always connect with each other on stage, and the script seems written more for television than the stage. This made for some too-long pauses between scenes. There was also occasionally a tendency to throw something in because it was funny, without worrying about how well it integrated into the play as a whole. That said, I laughed out loud regularly, and the rest of audience seemed to laugh even more often than I did.

Kevin Longfield
