Carry's Nation

PKF Productions—MTC Up The Alley

This is a one-woman show based on the life of Carrie A. Nation, a leading prohibitionist at the turn of the century.

The show involves many, many characters, which turns out to be a major problem.

Although Carol Sirugo worked VERY hard to incorporate the myriad number of characters into the story, she did not succeed.

Part of the fault lay in the script's structure—scenes were not long enough to clearly establish the individual characters.

But part of the fault lay with the performer. Her vocalizations were not distinctive enough to define each character. The end result was confusion for the audience both in following the narrative or which character was on stage at any given time.

It is difficult to be negative about a performer who is obviously so dedicated to the material. Her effort was genuine even if it did not evoke a genuine interest or sympathy for Carrie Nation on the part of this reviewer.

Michelle Cook



Love those uniforms! Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan in Lesbian National Parks and Services Wants You!

PILK'S MADHOUSE

RIBBIT PRODUCTIONS—Playhouse Studio

"Pilk's Madhouse" is just that—sheer, candy-coated madness. This material is out of the park.

Most of it is complete nonsensical gibberish that would fall flat with a weaker cast, but Ribbit Productions deliver their usual fantastically animated, high-energy performance.

Admittedly, Ribbit has staged productions I've enjoyed more, but past successes like "Be a Man" and "Boygroove" are a lot to live up to.

Shawn Kowalke

Under Elko

FREDDIE LONG—Bull And Bear

Freddie Long is a survivor. In her world, the show (and life) has to go on, no matter what.

This veteran actor/dancer has overcome many things, not the least of which was a family life filled with more than its share of unspeakable tragic moments. And Long shares them with us in her one-woman show, "Under Elko", which is a pointed reference to an unusual family cemetery plot in Elko, Nevada.

The story of her family is told through a conversation between Long and her deceased mother Thelma, as Long, the sole surviving member of her immediate family, prepares to bury Thelma's ashes.

Long plays all the parts—her parents, older sister and brother, herself—but primarily the story is told by Thelma, who frequently speaks directly to the audience.

Long's portrayal of Thelma is interesting in that the audience feels alternatively repelled and fascinated by her. Long doesn't ask us to judge, but simply to "feel". And although the subject matter is very dark, Long resists the temptation to drag her audience down, for this is really a celebration of survival. There are lighter moments, although you may feel unsure or uncomfortable about laughing out loud (though you should).

It should be noted that Long's performance, at least the first night, was mildly affected by another unfortunate circumstance. A couple of days prior to flying to Winnipeg from her home in northern California, Long suffered both a dislocated rib and a severe infection in her right hand and wrist, requiring her to be on medication and to regularly visit hospital here in Winnipeg, with the prospect looming of surgery to drain her hand.

Many other performers would have canceled under the circumstances. Not Freddie Long. The show (and life) must go on.

Robin Chase

COMING THIS FALL

THEATRE PROJECTS MANITOBA
2004-05 15TH SEASON

presents

Between Then And Now

by Harry Rintoul
Directed by Ross McMillan

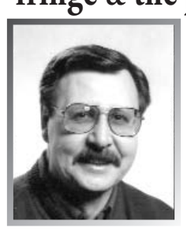
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GEORGE HICKES, MLA FOR POINT DOUGLAS
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Urgent,

Sharon Bajer—Fringe Phone Plays

A good way to use the time between plays is to listen to the short radio plays CBC offers at its venue behind the outdoor stage. They're free: all you do is pick up a phone and dial.

Last night I listened to Urgent. I didn't hear the credits, but I think the cast members were Bajer and Pat Hunter.

The play took while to get going, and I really had to listen hard to filter out the stage act, but the effort paid off in the end. If you don't feel silly laughing out loud in public, give Urgent a try.

Kevin Longfield

Ernie's Incredible Illucinations

SHOESTRING PLAYERS—PTE Studio

Ernie's special gift of illucination melds reality and fantasy for 55 minutes of delightful, silly fun.

Although we didn't quite get the lightning fast speed promised, there was plenty of escapism and "illucinating."

Special mention to the actor who plays Ernie, and the Aunt May scene.

This play is, indeed, wickedly funny.

Michelle Lagassé

My Brother Sang Like Roy Orbison

Lorraine Jane Productions—Bull And Bear

Randy Rutherford's critically-acclaimed account of growing up in the 1960s is a tale of teenage naïveté, innocence lost, and reconciliation, that tugs at the heart strings.

Rutherford, a master raconteur who engages his audience on a very personal level, guides us through his experiences of going to live with his older stepbrother, and developing sibling idolization that blossoms into a close friendship—all against the nostalgic backdrop of fast cars, drive-in burger palaces, the Vietnam War, the hippie movement and all that glorious music.

Rutherford deftly sprinkles funny moments throughout his monologue and at times can launch into an entire scene that becomes a comedic tour de force. His hilarious recollection of his first experience with marijuana in the company of three scantily-clad women is a classic.

This show clocked in at 80 minutes plus, but with Rutherford's gift for captivating his audience, you won't sense the passage of time. It just bubbles right along.

Robin Chase



The Truth About Daughters

Phantom Ship Productions—PTE Studio

Mr. Ling brings to the Festival a lovely tale of a father's quest of discovery for the truth about himself and his daughter.

This master storyteller takes us through seven stages of his child's development, and tells it with plenty of humour and love.

The story of his six-year-old's Christmas pageant was extremely hilarious, and there were tears in our eyes at the touching piano recital story.

At the end of the show, Mr. Ling is selling his book, "Truths and Half Truths," a topic he knows something about.

Michelle Lagassé

FRINGE SHOW: A Love Story

Monster Theatre—Planetarium Auditorium

Ryan Gladstone and Bruce Horak wrap up brilliantly what touring the Canadian Fringe circuit can be like. From Montreal to Vancouver and from writing a show to the oddities of the Beer Tent, this hilarious play about a Fringe play covers all the bases, and does it very well.

Murray Hunter

The CHE GUEVERA Experience

Viva Libre Winnipeg—Ragpickers Annex

As a young boomer, I saw pictures of the revolutionary Che Guevera everywhere. Who was this guy? Word of mouth was sparse and contradictory.

The Che Experience does a good job of taking the mystery away. Playwright Luzopone has the courage and discipline to put a real person on stage, and not the iconic figure that often results in biographical plays.

In his final hours, a severely wounded Guevera attempts to connect to someone before he dies. Unfortunately for him, no one seems to understand his motivations, much less approve of them. I suspect that modern audiences will share the trouble Che's visitors have understanding why a medical doctor would abandon his medical kit for an ammunition clip, but the real man had his reasons, and even if you cannot accept them, they are cause for reflection and interest.

The cast are not professional actors, and occasionally it shows, but the performances are honest and hit the mark most of the time. William Dimen is particularly strong as Che. The set is both simple and effective, and the direction is sound.

My only quibble is that in the play Che's captors are far gentler that I imagine they would have been. The limited air conditioning created a good approximation of the Bolivian jungle (minus the mosquitoes) and brought back fond memories of fringe venues past.

Luzopone is a playwright worthy of attention, and this production will reward fringers looking for something more than a few good laughs.

As a final note, rumour has it that Kristin Brooks plans to use the venue for future productions. Stay tuned: Winnipeg might finally have the small downtown theatre venue it needs.

Kevin Longfield

Brown boy meets brown girl.
Chaos ensues.
Two Browns Don't Make a White
Venue 9

NIGHT OF THE LIVING FRINGE

Prairie Salt

By: Jeffrey Pufahl & Andrew Auerbach
Original Music By: Julie Spangler

Prepare yourself for the sounds, songs and rhythms of the sea! A young, prairie man ventures off the farm and quests to become a tall-ship sailor. A thrilling, musical adventure through time, tradition and myth!

Venue 2— Up the Alley.

July 16 7:45pm	*July 21 11:45pm*
July 17 4:15pm	*July 22 4:00pm*
July 19 1:45pm	*July 24 12:15pm*
July 20 6:45pm	*July 25 9:00pm*

Jenny's of the World, Unite!



JENNY GERBASI

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