



Photo by Leif Norman

dRagamuffin Productions stirs up a storybook-load of trouble, when it leads Kids Venue visitors on a comic quest with a dragon, a lad, and a lass in Alack!

unADULTeRATED me

Rachelle Fordyce—The Conservatory

In a span of 60 minutes, Fizzy Tiff (the lead character) encounters more painful experiences of learning and maturation than most of us will in our lifetimes.

The premise revolves around Tiff's nervousness in preparing for the perfect evening with a new romantic interest. Her frenzy in making each moment "just right" evokes reminiscence and sympathy from anyone who's ever gone to dizzying ends to romance Mr./Ms. Right.

The play essentially comes in two schizophrenic acts. The first act is a comedic recount of the early phases of relationships. Some of the situations are mildly successful while others leave you with genuine laughs. The second act is an introspective journey that brings you from the brink of tears to the outer realms of revelation.

Congratulations to Fordyce for triumphantly blending comedy with life lessons. This is a worthy and profound play that everyone should enjoy, consider and assimilate.

Ray Yuen

Meet Fizzy Tiff, a very sweet girl who's getting ready for her upcoming date with her Facebook friend. Though she's really enthusiastic (somewhat overly so) about the evening, she's feeling a lack of self-confidence. Which she tries to combat by scripting the night ahead. Ah, but things hardly ever go according to the script...

Rachelle Fordyce is a charmer as Fizzy, bedecked in red clown nose, flower in her hair, and burlesque dancing ensemble. And with the aid of a volunteer from the audience, she makes the crowd howl with her nervous attempt at the first kiss, how to wine and dine her man, followed by a hilarious striptease (I'll never listen to Eurythmics the same way again).

The show, and Fizzy, go out with a flourish, performing an operatic aria with a soprano that fills the room. *While topless!* In a way, she bares her soul in more ways than one.

A show like this one is very much dependent on the audience, and the one I was in certainly delivered. Enter this show with as much enthu-

siasm as the main character, and you won't be disappointed. It's funny, touching, raunchy, and uplifting in the same 60 minutes.

Fizzy Tiff the character may lack in self-confidence, but Rachelle Fordyce the performer certainly has the confidence to deliver a bravura effort. The girl's got guts.

Karl Eckstrand

One Good Marriage

Theatre by the River—Planetarium

The ever-popular independent Winnipeg company, Theatre by the River returns to the Fringe Festival with *One Good Marriage*, written by Toronto's Sean Reycraft, with direction by James Firby.

The play features the debut pairing of husband and wife actors Matt TenBruggencate and Mel Marginet as, copacetically, a husband and wife with a dark, funny, bizarre story of the aftermath of the worst wedding reception ever.

The story takes its time coming out and while TenBruggencate and Marginet are fine actors with a flair for comedy, it is a bit like watching a tennis match played by your mom and dad.

Reycraft's script is brisk and features very-married dialogue with lots of interrupting and "talking it over".

It's a good story, well told although the repetitions got to me. They did. The repetitions. Mostly they got to me.

The repetitions.

But not so much that I wouldn't recommend it. Good, dark fun.

Moloney

Before I went to this show, someone asked me if I'd seen anything yet that had knocked my socks off. If only I had seen this first; I would have had a good answer.

Mel Marginet and Matt TenBruggencate play a couple who got married, went on a honeymoon, and then everyone at the reception died. It's a series of interrupted monologues, with some interaction between the characters, somewhat reminiscent of Daniel MacIvor.

It required total concentration and perfect timing to work, and Mel and Matt really deliver. The script

also walks a very slender line between comedy and tragedy flawlessly. I'm certainly going to be looking for Sean Reycraft's work in the future. What's even better is that the script seems to have been written especially for the two actors. Now if only I could find my socks...

Kevin Longfield

Gilgamesh

Struts and Frets Players—Playhouse Studio

What a brilliant, delightful show from this young troupe. The original Epic of Gilgamesh can be a difficult and confusing epic, but the Struts and Frets Players deftly accomplish the task of engaging modern audiences with this ancient tale.

There is a lot of respect and love for the story in evidence; while a scattering of modern jests is included, the humour is always appropriate and never detracts from the legendary quality of the tale.

This smart, quick-paced play was written by the two central players, and it is at times comical, sometimes poignant, always intensely entertaining. The creative decisions made are delightfully clever; the figures reflected against a lit screen are hilarious. The snakey, wheedling Ishtar practically stalks Gilgamesh through the tale, the sun god Shamash is, like, totally mellow, and the ageless Utnapishtim is the crotchety old man yelling at the mortal whippersnappers to stay off his island.

The actors, too, do an admirable job. This is a good ensemble cast, with Ariel Levine especially skillful in depicting the soul-crushing agony of a man who cannot accept his own mortality, and the friendship at the heart of the tale is very touching.

As if that weren't enough, the fight scenes were excellent, the costuming was quite elegant, and the masks were great.

The performance I attended was cut off near the end due to time constraints, and it's a measure of the audience's enjoyment that a loud whoosh of disappointed "Awwwwwww!"s filled the Playhouse when the play stopped. Even without the last five minutes, I'm still recommending this show as a wonderful, must-see offering to the Fringe.

Lindsay Labanca