

Oleanna**Nomadic Players—PTE Studio**

In spite of David Mamet's script being 20 years old and having been shown at MTC Mainstage and made into a film, it's still as relevant today as it was then.

The chemistry between Ken Rudderham (John the professor) and Rhea Fedorchuk (Carol the student) is fascinating to watch, especially as it unravels into chaos as the play progresses.

The first act begins with Carol coming to John because she doesn't understand what he is getting at in his lectures, and she wants to find clarity. Following an intense interchange between the two, Carol and her "feminist" group accuse John of 'harassment'. This leads into Carol laying charges of sexual abuse against John which leads to his dismissal.

This series of events leaves the audience wondering who was at fault? Did both of them go too far?

An excellent production for those who like a thinking play.

Nick Ternette

Robots Eating Humans**Caca Pasa Prods—The Conservatory**

This play ended violently. That is the main event of the production.

The play itself takes place in a basement of a couple who had broken up, but who are still living together.

Opening with the man running home after trying to get groceries, and seeing robots eating a person, this play is mainly the two of them arguing as the radio plays U2's 2004 hit, Vertigo, over and over again.

The entire play was rather uneventful until a man comes bursting in, and the ex-couple let him stay.

In the end, when everything gets really gory, you are left with this thought, did the robots win?

Arden Pruden

When the Killer Mutant Lizards Attack**Stupid Gumball Dispenser Prods.—Conservatory**

This one-man and multiple-role show describes what happens when giant killer mutant lizards attack.

After the prologue, we get a long list of survivors all describing a little part of the story, and—in the end—all stating, "I'm Ready." All but one, that is.

This was a very funny dark comedy. I would recommend it to any people who might have been curious about what happened after Godzilla attacked. And I don't mean that in a bad way.

Arden Pruden

Sparks**412 Squadron—Playhouse Studio**

It's always worthwhile to see anything Jon Anderson is in. He never disappoints.

This time he is perfectly paired with Julie Funk, who gives as good as she gets from him. She's a pert, foxy, 30-something hiding a horrible secret beneath her tough exterior. As a waitress, with a yearning for normalcy, she is just the kind of woman to create friction with Jon's can't-catch-me, sly fox, poet persona. It's quite the adventure as their rocky relationship turns to love and they realize that sacrifices must be made if they are to remain together. Beautiful.

Lisa Campbell

This play seems to be the result of a university exercise in playwriting. It has some potential, but seems to be only half-finished, with no real ending. The male and female leads in this dramatic rom-com have chemistry with each other, and they parlay that into chemistry between the characters—which is good because that's all they've got going for them.

These two have little in common, and I'm sick of seeing the all-too-typical male treating the female like crap, only to have the female think his behavior is charming and fall for him even more. And I'm a guy.

The story involves an aggressive, obnoxious, down-and-out poet who tries dine-and-dash, only to be caught by his waitress, a poor abuse victim. The two eventually have a one-night stand that turns into a budding romance.

Caley Suliak plays the waitress, and the compassion and vulnerability she brings to her character is appealing. I wanted to see more of her, and find out how she ultimately deals with this situation. It's amazing she's even attracted to this lout, given her horrifying past. Thankfully, some good fortune he has later on adjusts his attitude somewhat. Maybe a scene identified as "five years later" showing a happier situation could have been utilized instead of the ending drop-off.

Beau Hajavitch

Mid-Life! The Crisis Musical**Crosswalk Players—PTE Mainstage**

Achingly funny...especially if you're 40 and older. All the bases are touched—even if we're not capable of an in-the-park home run anymore—what with the gradual loss of hair and hearing, and the unlikelihood of getting a good night's sleep. A good night's sleep...did I already say that?

Now a steady stream of good-byes would soon lose appeal, so the tone varies with a song to the biological clock, the revelations revealed from laser surgery, and the reversal of roles so now the child cares for the parent. All six performers have a chance to shine in different combinations. Some songs stretch their vocal ranges, and the basketball bouncing drowned out the lyrics in one song, but the energy and focus was always there. Kudos to Julian on the keyboard. Oh, and maybe it's a post 40 thing, but the company forgot to credit Bob and Jim Walton on their program for the book, music and lyrics.

Ron Robinson

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