

the Jenny Revue

©1991

50¢
Suggested Donation

The Time Machine

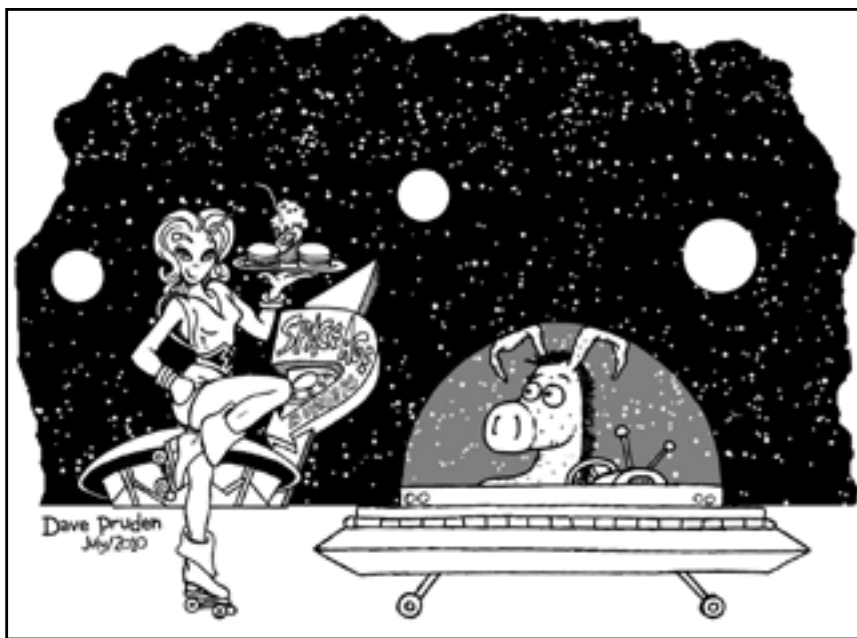
Dr. Caligari does it again. A fine time was had by all (including me! Yea!) last night as some absurd number of equally absurd Fringe performers, from a cross section of companies rampaged through the upper floor of the King's Head in *Dr. Caligari's Accelerating Cabaret*.

If there's one thing that everyone attending came away with, it was PENIS! VAGINA! Well, I presume that everyone attending also arrived with one or the other, but a full house shouting out one or the other of these primary sexual characteristics in response to a list of words (motorcycle: PENIS! Used Honda: VAGINA!) was a linking theme. The audience response wasn't always unanimous but it resonated loudly enough to make the building tremble.

Music, improv, sketches, and performance poetry were served up from spots all over the room, each act once again lit by audience members holding flashlights, some provided by the cabaret, but a fair number brought from home by those who have attended one of the first five Dr. Caligari spectacles.

Most of the acts came from out-of-town companies, but it was Winnipeg's own CRUMBS who wrapped things up with an improvised synopsis of the entire show (presumably for those of us with short attention spans or weak bladders) and reaped as many laughs with their mini recaps as had the originals. All in all, it was great, glorious fun, and I can't wait for next year's.

Banjo Work—Well at least they got him off the streets. Last night, Rapid Fire Theatre's improv antics were accompanied by the fence-sitting, coffee-sipping, banjo criminal, David Nishikawa. He was filling in at DotDotDot for guitarist "I don't just take pictures, y'know" Leif Norman, (who we used to refer to as Jenny's own shutterbug, until



the Fringe stole him from us by the simple strategy of giving him money).

Other Stuff—This is your penultimate Jenny Revue. If you want to try to make the last one, today is the day and tonight is the night. If you've seen a show, particularly one we haven't covered, jot down a quick reason why we should go and see it or avoid it like the plague, and get it to me, preferably by noon tomorrow. Just remember that we eschew the whole arbitrary star rating system, so if you put 'em in, we'll just take 'em out.

Actually, Karl Eckstrand penned a letter to Jenny (which we haven't been able to print yet due to space) encouraging Fringe-goers to forget about the whole rating system and seek out those shows that got little coverage or so-so reviews.

And Celeste Sansregret (*Breast Friends*) has another take on the affect that these star rating systems have on the livelihoods of travelling companies, noting that a company with a high rating will make a living, but any show branded with anything but the two highest ratings may wind up facing near empty houses. You can read Celeste's article at <http://inamagickingdom.blogspot.com>. My take on it is obvious. When I get reviews that include

star ratings, I take them out. The only stars you'll see in the Jenny are in Shameless Self Promotions where companies often use quotes from reviews by media that use the star system.

Why the established media can't just let their reviewers—most of whom have no more (and sometimes considerably less) knowledge about live theatre than the Fringe-going public—summarize their experience at any given show without slapping a number on it, I don't know.

What's even harder to understand is why we fall for it. Just because a show isn't one person's cup of tea, doesn't mean it isn't a theatrical experience that will

linger fondly in your memory for years.

And that, I suppose, pretty much sums up the Jenny Revue's raison d'être. We'll publish two reviews of the same show in which the writers had vastly different experiences (see *The Taming of the Shrew* inside today for an example).

Our own reviewing problems are more mundane. The Fringe ticket reservation system demands that all requests for media pass tickets be in by 8 pm. But we don't usually get the bulk of our reviews from all of you until much later. Therefore, we sometimes find ourselves booked into a show on the same day that we're printing a review of it "out of crowd". But since we're honour bound to cover a show, once we accept a media ticket—and since cancelling a reservation is, apparently, nearly impossible and something the Fringe is reluctant to do, we often find ourselves publishing second or third reviews of some shows while letting write-ups for new shows languish for a day.

Obviously we need to time travel to solve this. Someone call H. G. Wells.

Coral McKendrick

The Jenny Revue is a proudly independent publication NOT affiliated with the Winnipeg Fringe Festival

