

## StarBach's: The Coffee Cantata

Naomi Forman Productions—Exchange Church

It's hard to believe that over three centuries ago, Johann Sebastian Bach would write music about caffeine addiction. It would seem that Bach was gazing into his crystal ball to see today's coffee-crazed culture.

The show is based around Bach's *Koffee Kantate*, and is surprisingly modern. A "cougar" of great wealth becomes obsessed with a handsome barista at her local Starbucks—much to the chagrin of her brother, who oversees her rapidly dwindling trust fund. Will she give in to her macchiato-fueled mania and flee with her young charge, or will she have to go (gasp) decaffeinated?

It's a great deal of fun, and it proves that opera doesn't have to be staid or stodgy. The three singers are very adept in their roles. The barista even provides samples to lucky members of the audience (and there's organic coffee on sale in the venue!)

I even think it'd be a good general introduction to opera—you could certainly throw it in there with the Gilbert & Sullivan operettas.

This show does beg the question: if operas can be set in a Starbucks, can other musical genres follow? A Canadian rock opera in a Tim Horton's? A country western show at a Robin's? Or a funky folk rock play set in the Fyxx? Mr. J.S. Bach, I think, would approve.

Karl Eckstrand

## Fringe Family Fun Show

Comedy Illusions of Greg Wood—Argue Bldg.

We took the children from our child care centre to see this show and no one was disappointed. There was plenty of laughter and cheering, and the adults were also entertained. My fellow ECEs and I were quite surprised about this, as it is rare to find a presentation that is so entertaining for young and old alike. It was great to see the magician use children from our centre in the show. The almost

full house was into the show for the entire hour. We would highly recommend this to other centres and to anyone who wants to see a very well-done, family-oriented presentation.

*The Staff of Agassiz Child Care.*

## Hockey Dad: A Play in 3 Periods

burnt thicket theatre—Warehouse

Well, I love theatre and hockey, so this show naturally popped up on my radar.

James Popoff portrays a failed hockey player who was born on the day of the famous Paul Henderson goal (Sept 28/1972) during the big, Russia / Canada series. He was never quite forgiven by his dad who missed it.

Worse, he gives up hockey when bitten by the acting bug, for which he receives no real support from his dad, as he did in hockey.

When he has a daughter who seems to be gravitating towards the arts, he is elated by her interest. Sorry to say, dear old grandad has other plans; and cajoles her into his love of hockey. The story revolves around the relationship between the actor and his hockey dad, and his feelings about becoming a hockey dad himself.

A worthwhile play, and there's even a shoot at the net contest.

Kevin Campbell

## Stuff

Battered Suitcases—Ragpickers Theatre

Lots of cuteness, lots of laughs, stifling venue.

The digs at Sound and Fury, Shelby Bond's former troupe, were very amusing.

Shelby has a new partner, Todd Abrams, and they have a bit of chemistry and are a good fit, working well together.

The play is exactly what the program states—nothing too deep here. So just relax, and enjoy *Stuff*. Participation is encouraged by these two stuffy hosts!

Lisa Campbell

## Rant Demon

Dr. Keir Co.—Planetarium

One-person shows, especially those performed and written by the same person, frequently have the character of therapy sessions for the author-performer. The clearest example of this I've seen to date is Kier Cutler's latest. (Qualification: I haven't seen *Psycho Bitch* yet.)

It seems Cutler has a problem. Not with drugs or alcohol, though his problem has had many of the same consequences those things can cause. His problem is with overreacting to and perseverating over those times when things don't go his way—in short, with ranting. As he owns up to early on, he even rants about his ranting. Indeed, most of the show consists of him doing just that, with his repeated choruses of "it doesn't make sense!" eventually culminating in the admission "I don't make sense!"

It's not all doom and gloom; Cutler talks about the steps he has taken to change and become a better person, including his recent engagement (congratulations!).

Performing this show is itself part of that process. (Hey, whatever works for him; he tried the more conventional sort of therapy, but it sounds like he had a totally incompetent therapist, or at least one who was a poor match for him.) This does, however, make for a show that is less entertaining, if far more personal, than the majority of Cutler's past performances. There are both laughs and insights to be had here, and I certainly don't feel like I wasted my time going; but I must rate it as the weakest of the ten shows I've seen so far at this Fringe—although that's more a tribute to the strength of the other nine than a serious criticism of this show; all it really means is that there are at least nine shows that are even better.

Jeff Heikkinen



See you at  
the Fringe

ROB ALTEMEYER  
MLA FOR WOLSELEY • 775-8575



SARASVATI  
FEM  
FEST  
ON THE EDGE

GREAT THEATRE  
DOESN'T END AT  
THE FRINGE!

September 25  
to  
October 2

Canwest Centre for Theatre & Film  
(University of Winnipeg, 400 Colony Street)

www.sarasvati.ca  
204-586-2236

SARASVATI  
PRODUCTIONS  
TRANSFORMATIVE THEATRE