

**For Tea and Country****Naughty Sailboat—Warehouse**

This seems to be a send-up of the imperialistic derring-do tales I used to read in 1950s, anthologies meant to glorify the British Empire. We soon learn that our hero, Sir Captain Jason Bigsy, is slightly off-kilter; and, as the play proceeds, more off-kilter characters and situations emerge.

I think you have to get on the right track from the beginning to enjoy this production, and I have to admit that I missed that train, to abuse a metaphor. For instance, in the opening scene two actors hold up a sheet so that we can have a Union Jack projected while stirring imperial music plays. This lasts far longer than necessary, so when a news announcer comes out and stands out of his light while he sets the scene, it is difficult to tell whether this is a deliberate choice, or whether the actor really can't find his light. I have to admit that my mind wandered often during the production, but the play also had some good moments, particularly the final scene in which Bigsby finally gets to confront his nemesis.

Kevin Longfield

**Etoile****a KDSZ Show—Kids Venue SCD**

A show made by a family, for a family. An adorable show about a young girl on the road to stardom, and how that may not be the best path. It had its risks, specifically having a young baby in the cast, who did wonderfully. Well-acted and well-written, a show to take the family to.

Arden Pruden

**The Pre-History of Moses P.****Erik de Waal—Rachel Browne Theatre**

This show was touching, a story about a son, and his memories about his life, living with his wife, buying a house. And a father, about having his son, losing his wife, and then losing his son. Brilliantly told, switching quite clearly back and forth between the two characters, Erik de Waal plays every character in his one-man show, and plays them extremely well.

Arden Pruden

**African Folktales with Eric de Waal****YAP Theatre—Kids Venue SCD**

A favorite at Kids Fringe, Eric de Waal is returning with his puppets for another show. By engaging the audience nearly non-stop, he grabs the kids' attention and they don't want him to let go. Conveyed with a voice that makes you want to listen, these stories aren't just for kids, they're for the parents too.

Arden Pruden

**Something About Life****Chris Gibbs—School of Contemporary Dancers**

Chris Gibbs is back, starting another, probably very successful, Fringe year. The show was very relaxed, and like most of his shows, he traveled off topic quite a bit, though I couldn't always tell if it was on purpose or by accident. He stressed that the show was about advice, and he did give it, which led to the famous laughter that only he can make. A show to see.

Arden Pruden

Someone once said that Jack Benny could get laughs reading the phone book. Well, I think Gibbs could get laughs reading the phone book backwards. He is technically superb, and his material isn't bad, either. He didn't have me gasping for breath like he did in his 2003 hit, *The Power of Ignorance*, but I still felt like I'd had a good workout when I left the theatre.

Kevin Longfield

**Oh, Tannenbaum!****Stinging Nettle Productions—MTC Mainstage**

An odd piece, taking you through the subconscious mind of a young scientist while he's asleep. The play seemed to drag, there was way too much cryptic language for it to be interesting. The cast was enormous, a hefty 17; and it didn't seem to be necessary to have that many people, when five of them sat in a corner of the stage for nearly the entire show. Although their costumes were quite good, the show might have benefitted from using fewer characters.

Arden Pruden

**Grim & Fisher: a deathly comedy...****WONDERHEADS—MTC Mainstage**

Full-face masks are not easy to work with, and the two actors in this show somehow developed characters and created an illusion of facial expressions, which doesn't sound possible, but they did it! Not only were the masks amazingly well made, but the show itself was fabulous, as you follow the actors in their struggles to survive. This show combined the right amounts of comedy, sadness, and whimsy. Definitely a show to consider.

Arden Pruden

**R.I.S.K.****Michael Davidson—Cinematheque**

What can I even say about this show? Go see it! Okay, think about something risky or different that you've seen in theatre. The most risky and different thing you've ever seen in theatre. Got it? It doesn't come close to what Michael does in this show. It's amazing.

The show really makes the watcher think as an individual, not as part of an audience. The challenges in the show are not intrusive or demanding but definitely made me walk away questioning some of the choices I make everyday. Not big choices that change the world, but little choices that according to Michael, can change the world. It's a show that challenges everything, religion, society, governments, police, violence, he single handedly stands as both the antagonist and hero of the people; demanding that even if no one else stands with him, they will hear what he has to say. And just let me say, what he has to say is worth hearing.

Eli Grendel



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*Gods and boys? Or only Kale in a quest for Raine?*