

The Tucker Mother Lode

Bitter Pill Ensemble—Alloway Hall

This Dave Colvin-penned script is a production by Bitter Pill Ensemble, a local group who produce shows at the Fringe for the sheer enjoyment of it.

Freddie Jessiman (played by Dave Pruden, whose cartoons are a regular feature of the Jenny Revue) makes a living selling his inheritance—collections of insect specimens to which he adds with the help of the socially awkward Tucker, (Al Garand), all while nurturing the desire to be a tap dancer. He is, it is eventually revealed, eagerly anticipating a registered letter inviting him to audition for a professional company in another city.

Jennifer Quinn rounds out the cast as the aggressive Tannis, another character with no visible means of support (although I was later told that her aggressive questioning about the chemical smell in Freddie's apartment was meant to indicate that she was in the drug trade, which was not at all clear from the dialogue and which never comes up again).

The narrative jumps months at a time, with little to explain how we go from Freddie's understandably negative reaction to Tannis' toxic personality, and her aggressive bullying of Tucker, to the two of them hooking up, based on little more than her persistent barging into his apartment uninvited.

There are several large holes in the plot and little logic to the characters' actions. (For example, months after casually sharing a drink with Tannis, Freddie casually tosses off the information that he is a recovering alcoholic.) Suffice to say, Tannis eventually damages both the relationship between the two men and her own relationship with Freddie through an act that is designed to keep Freddie from leaving town, although she subsequently announces her own plans to leave.

The conclusion is similarly confusing with Freddie making a gesture that makes little, if any, symbolic or financial sense.

It was fun to see Pruden trip the light fantastic for a few seconds, but the script needs a rigorous rewrite, with special attention to internal logic and character development.

C. McKendrick

The Witch

Erik de Waal—Crocus Building (Bannatyne Entrance)

From the moment the lights went up to the moment they came down, Erik de Waal had my complete and utter attention. I was entranced by his tale, which wasn't entirely happy, but was quite the story.

I was caught up in the tales of the gods woven throughout the story, which added a mystic edge to the show that only Erik can bring. Need I say more? This show is a must-see in my books.

Arden Pruden

Cupid and Psyche

The Struts and Frets Players—Rudolph Rocker...

They're back! And even if it is 'all Greek to you', you'll get your money's worth.

Once again the Greek myths prove how malleable they are in this tale of "god" love gone bad. Cupid is immortal and Psyche acts like she is. His mother wants her dead—and that is not hyperbole...although it might be a different myth.

Will Cupid draw back his bow? Will Psyche peek at her beau? The pop cultural references fly fast and furious (music, books, et al, and his brother Bob) and if you don't like one, the next one is winging its way across the footlights like Nike's sandal.

No recorded music or shadow puppets this time out, but still a Greek salad of delights for teens and up.

Ron Robinson

I have an appreciation for Roman history, though I've never really learned it. Because of this, I went into this show without really expectation. I was greeted with some lines voiced by a chorus, in unison, (which must have taken a fair amount of practice) and slightly sarcastic, very blunt humor that was right up my street. A talented group of local actors portrayed this myth with a modern edge to the lines that made it very interesting to watch. A true show of the Fringe spirit.

Arden Pruden

Lungs

Theatre by the River—Absurd Machine Studios

This is a very well written play presented in a theatrical style without reliance on sets and props, allowing audience members to feel free

to use their imaginations.

The two actors, Derek Leenhouts and Mel Marginet are simply outstanding, presenting a challenging and difficult script that paints a story for an appreciative audience who were on their feet to applaud an emotional and well-acted performance.

Be prepared for a very warm environment and a long stair climb, but it's well worth the slight discomfort.

Congratulations! Well done!

Richard Ball

TEMPLE OF KHAOS: A Modern Myth

DANIEL NIMMO—Playhouse Studio

I loved it. *TEMPLE OF KHAOS* is electric energy. The three actors handle *KHAOS* with ease.

The boy King of the world gets corrupted absolutely, descending into a life, a world, that he never anticipated, but was orchestrated by the epower-hungry Donald Trumpahdis and where does it go? Where does it end?

Subtle vaudevillian influences rule.

Candassy Cross

Jenny's of the World, Unite!



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