

Fantastic Fringe Finishes Fabulo



The Fringe hit the street this year, with a bang.

reviews by Suzette C. Chan and Gilbert Bouchard

Gimme That Prime Time Religion (Nexus Theatre): Preaching to the converted: liberals telling fellow liberals about the evils of right wing showbiz evangelism. The jokes were funny but the play was pointless. Attempts to show how someone can be attracted to TV evangelism were unconvincing despite superior performances by Murray McCune and Audrey Webb. *Prime Time Religion* is scheduled for the upcoming Nexus Theatre season. Hopefully the show will have become more substantial.

SCC

Penumbra (Penumbra Theatre) This Edmonton company lived up to its billing of presenting "an exciting evening of corporeal theatre." Mime and dance combined to comment on inter-personal relationships or the lack thereof. Crowd favorite: the amusing (and dangerous) stilt scenes.

SCC

The Citizen's Tango (Nebulous Rebels): Calgary's David Cassel was inexhaustible in this hour-long performance piece dealing with fear and loathing in the big city. There were few fresh insights, but Cassel's highly visual interpretation of dehumanization and alienation were intriguing nonetheless.

SCC

From the Memoirs of Johnny Daze (Toy Gun Productions): Ava Rave (Ava Rave), an emerald green-haired caricature of a human being, is addicted to art. Luli Zinc (Shirley Sutton Jones), a contemptuous, shallow performance artist, is the only thing or person who can satisfy Ava's need for a daily fix of art — that is until Ava starts demanding too much. Johnny Daze (the play's author John Beckett Wimbs.) all icing, no cake a kept boy living on welfare till he can find a sugar mama, is Ava's best friend, and can only watch helplessly as Ava succumbs to her obsession. *From the Memoirs of Johnny Daze*, chronicling a vicious circle of exploitation and possession, played out on a set with golden garbage cans and broken baby dolls, is a wonderful satire of everything from bad movies to instant art to trends. The winner of technical and originality awards at the Quebec Drama Festival, it could have won the same in Edmonton if (God forbid) the Fringe gave itself awards. Here's hoping Toy Gun Productions returns next year with such a brilliant flash.

GB & SCC

The Metamorphosis (The Acting Gypsies): Irreverent adaptation of Franz Kafka's novella. Gregor Samsa is reincarnated not as a giant insect, but as a homosexual couple

handcuffed to each other. The laughs are fast and furious, but with a wee bit of character development, it would have been a perfect lampoon. A shame the Acting Gypsies don't plan to mount *The Metamorphosis* again.

SCC

P.S. Your Cat is Dead (P.S. Productions): A pointless, badly scripted, insensitive "comedy" about a loser who goes bonkers and ties up a gay cat burglar in the kitchen. Don't ask how the loser discovers the burglar is gay or why it should be important. Every situation in *P.S. Your Cat is Dead* arises as unnaturally as the Swamp Thing as excuses to launch rafts of bad jokes. Adds a whole new meaning to the word homophobic.

GB & SCC

Sometimes She Lets Her Colours Out (Mary Jo Fulmer): Calgary dancer Mary Jo Fulmer spent six months in Japan and borrowed Japanese themes and aesthetics in this uneven presentation of dance and poetry. Some pieces were very strong, others seemed flat or superficial. Ten-year-old Jocelyn Thierian and 13-year-old Megan Kinny stole the show with exuberant performances

GB & SCC

Free Food and Beer; The Comedy Commission: Two Edmonton comedy troupes of the SCTV persuasion. *Free Food and Beer* would have benefitted with better pacing. The first half of the young company's set was bubbly, but the second half was flat. Skits ranged from the hilarious Michael Swell Meets the Dull Family to the unfunny Foreign Film Festival. The Comedy Commission is a professional quartet of warped souls. Their visions of Jim Keegstra discovering that God is Yiddish and of *Friendly Giant's* Jerome the Giraffe as a minor political philosopher had the audience in tears. There were only a couple of boring skits that could have easily been chopped from the program.

SCC

Issues in the Loo (Loo Enterprises): Disappointing series of vignettes probable intended to lampoon aspects of modern life. Biggest problems: lack of funny jokes or situations, no sense of timing.

SCC

Red Sands and Strange Remembrances did not belong at The Fringe. It is nothing more than a badly-typed collection of horrible prose poetry. The Fringe is a theatre festival,

and theatre is supposed to have characters, dialogue, action. *Red Sands* is just a guy in a bathrobe star sparse set and recite of-consciousness.

L'il Abner (E.L.O.P.E.): bad Broadway script and trained cast, coupled with poor timing, make for one m

Buried Child (Gonz): on the other hand, is a play that was matched cast in a tight theatre Fringe. A great descriptive thriller, and the production was so good it was almost a self-ind

Another prize-winner by Robert Clinton. **MI** 1983 Alberta One-Act I

tion, is a witty, well-written wanderer. A fine, ente of life that really de

duction.

There was no short Fringe. The surprise o apart from a few bor most were well worth t

Two Elizabeths, for example, musical featuring the r two teenagers, both na in 1961, and the other i nes the resolution of s love and relationships decades.

Another enjoyable **a Hard Place**, a satirical and all its masks. A slashes through many hood, from stripper, to

My favourite musica period) had to be **Din la Quindicina** **Wine** excellent plays by Stew sharp and dry, like a v be hearing more about future, I'm sure.

Most plays at the Fr Some were not what Take, for example, I Productions) a modern chological drama. Pet capture the flair and t than English without

script's direct appeal. I last days of Christoph exile and his (possible kespeare's plays. A bit enjoyable.

Other plays that we **men Behind Bars** (a go too long). **Present Ten** deeper than your aver **Man Who Called Hin** Lee meet Philosophy (OK, I guess, but I I **Theatresports** (Theatre name).

K.D. Lang stole the show with an energetic p



A juggler entertained an evening crowd at the street dance.

Photo Bill St. John

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