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BC'S THEATRE WEB-ZINE

VOLUME IV – ISSUE #2 | THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15TH 2005

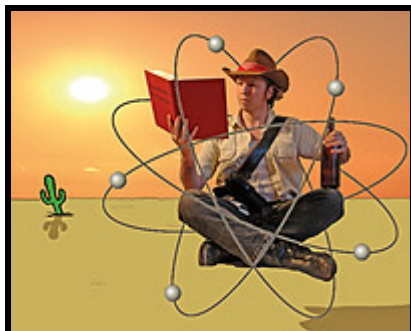


Review > Various Companies doing *Various Productions*, by Various Authors
The Vancouver Fringe Festival, Various Locations; directed by Various People

FRINGE: Yes; No; Maybe...

Lots to rush to; lots to miss; lots of varying quality

Reviewed by Ian Alexander Martin; Editor & Publisher



Mr. Quark (Kennedy Goodkey) in *Cosmic Banditos*, presented by Bissett & Goodkey at the Vancouver Fringe Festival.

[Photograph by Darren Barefoot;

Digital Illustration by Kennedy Goodkey]

waste to much of Mexico, leaves the patrons of a Drive-In theatre in Virginia with an extreme case of marijuana munchies and terrorizes the population of San Diego. Hurricanes, sharks, firing-squads, and the big-bang all meet on one wild stage in Granville Island this September as Bissett & Goodkey bring their off-the-hook vision to life in their own creative imagining.

And if that doesn't spark your interest nothing will.

Thanks to the brilliance of **Matthew Bissett's** direction keeping things slightly faster than we can keep up with, there is more anarchy, absurdist story-telling and meta-science than you will find in any play – even the early work of Sir Tom Stoppard. This show is not to be seen by anyone who expects to follow the intricacies of the plot and the physics principles if they've even thought of beer within an hour of the performance. However, taking an hour to empty your head before venturing out into the theatrical pool is highly recommended.

Kennedy Goodkey, as Mr Quark, is the closest thing you get to someone acting as a guide through the world of the play, but don't expect him to be completely helpful as the quantity of times you have to suspend disbelief is innumerable. Even if he weren't as much a part of the production team as he is, he would be the perfect man for this role. Mr. Goodkey once again does what he does best: make insanity perfectly comprehensible and realistic. As ourselves on stage, we have both a protagonist and hero – if you can call the character heroic – as well as being the 'meta-eye' of the story.

Josh Drebit, as the Bandit José, provides a down-to-earth quality to the writing that might otherwise get too wrapped-up in just how darn clever it is. His matter-of-fact approach to problems may be at odds with the Hero's, but you feel like buying him a drink out of gratitude. The problem is that Mr. Drebit makes him so real that José would then insist on buying you one, then you would buy one for him, and the next thing you know is that the two of you are wasted and he's telling you about his obsession for Tina, the physicist's sinful daughter.

Ari Soloman plays every other character with such tasty scenery-chewing goodness, it's no wonder there was no scenery by the time they reached the second performance. We first see him as Lenny, a psychopathic drug-dealer with a past that is only hinted at... and that's probably good, as then you can't be an 'accessory after the fact'. If there was ever a question about who needs to play Duke in the musical *Doonesbury*, Mr. Soloman's Lenny provides the answer. The rest of the characters he brings to life range in age, gender, and philosophical outlook, but you never confuse one for another.

There are more great lines than you can shake a stick at (stick not included in cost of ticket). I'm not sure I've ever laughed so hard, and so quickly (so as not to miss anything) in any show – and never during one at the Fringe. A highly intelligent piece of idiocy.

Go. Go now. Stop reading this, get over your fear of science and Spanish 11 classes (there are sur-titles), and go to the Gym for the theatrical work-out of your life.

■ **RATING:** ★★★★★

■ Those Responsible: **Matthew Bissett**, Writer / Director / Slide & Lighting Designer; **Josh Drebit**, Actor; **Kennedy Goodkey**, Writer / Actor / Graphic Design; **Heather Johnston**, Stage Manager; **Mike Low**, Sound Design; **Ari Soloman**, Actor; **A. C. Weisbecker**, writer.

■ Bissett & Goodkey present *Cosmic Banditos* at **The False Creek Community Centre Gym**, Venue #6 as part of the Vancouver International Fringe Festival.

- Friday September 16 @ 12:15 am [quarter past midnight, so technically Saturday]
- September 17 @ 10:30 pm

WARNING: *Cosmic Banditos* contains extremely offensive Spanish language.