

ENTERTAINMENT

Urinetown is non-stop entertainment

The title alone could make one question Georgetown Globe Productions choice of performing *Urinetown, The Musical* on the stage of John Elliott Theatre.

But after seeing it, one could be 'flushed' with emotion, and 'relieved' to have attended the show.

The plot centers around a city who has experienced a critical water shortage, and since toilet flushing is the major use of water, the people can no longer use their in-house toilets, and must 'pay to pee' at local privately-owned public facilities, where the common people must line up to go pee.

Anyone caught relieving themselves anywhere other than at the public facility is arrested and sent away to some bizarre place called Urinetown, where they are never heard from again.

Meanwhile, the CEO of the company owning the facilities is getting filthy rich (along with his corrupt associates), while putting pressure on the bladders of the common-folk. As the pressure mounts, the common people revolt, under the leadership of Bobby Strong, after his father is vanquished to Urinetown for peeing in public.

A somewhat unconventional show for Globe to undertake, the first impression of the show *Urinetown* is one of a dark foreboding nature, with a sense of the town being something of a ghetto, and being sent away to Urinetown bears an uncanny resemblance to a concentration camp.

While the show is a satirical comedy and has some very funny dialogue (playing on names and old sayings as well), it also has a dark feeling.

Having said that, it's also jammed-packed with talent, and gives an eye-popping visual trip, as well as a finely-tuned musical show, laced with elaborate choreography thrown in for good measure.

The audience is held comfortably and securely in the hands of Mark Llewellyn and Cecily Restivo, as they not only act as narrators, but also add to the show as characters.

Llewellyn, playing Officer Lockstock (who surprise, surprise has a partner Officer Barrel— 'Lockstock and Barrel,' get it?) brings the audience up to speed about the water

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shortage problem and the resulting ramifications of not paying to pee, while Restivo plays Little Sally, who, in her little girl voice, has the audience on the verge of wetting their pants with some of her audacious and profound lines in dialogue with Llewellyn. They are a perfect complement to each other's characters.

David Cairns is the epitome of evil as the sinister Caldwell B. Cladwell, the CEO of the company holding the towns people's bladders up for ransom as they must pay their pittance of pennies to pee while perpetrating and preserving his provocative position.

Michelle Giacometti is outstanding as the loud and pushy Penelope Pennywise, taking full advantage of her outstanding singing voice to enhance her character.

Chris Burke gives a solid performance of the whipped Senator Fipp whose hand has been padded with more bribes than he can recall.

Gregg Shanks and Lisa Tass give the show a love interest as he plays

rebel Bobby Strong and she takes the part of Hope Cladwell, daughter of the CEO villain.

Both give solid performances, complementing each other.

The set of the show is quite moody, having a prison-like feel to it, which echoes the mood of the characters. Lighting is quite dramatic and evokes a feeling of the helplessness of the people standing in line to pee.

The strength of the show is no doubt the material. The music is strong and at times even threatening, and the players on stage have taken the technical challenges of this show and run with it.

My first impressions were mixed—the material was almost depressing at times—but as the show continued and the plight of the protagonists developed, by the end of the second act, the true genius of the satire emerges, enhanced and coupled with Globe's talent on stage.

Urinetown not only makes one reflect, it also entertains— non-stop for more than two hours.

The show continues its run this week (Nov. 30, Dec. 1, 2).

(Ted Brown can be reached at tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

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