

Men, Women and Other Problems--A Complex Quartet on a Small Stage

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The Cast of SPIKE HEELS with Milwaukee Entertainment Group (L to R) Brittany Curran, Josh Perkins, Becky Cofta, Cory Jefferson Hagen

The **Milwaukee Entertainment Group** delves into the complexities of professional, interpersonal and romantic relationships on an intimate stage this month in Theresa Rebeck's comedic early '90s drama *Spike Heels*. Director **J.J. Gatesman** brings together a cast of two men and two women in a modern Pygmalion story revised for the American middle class at the end of the 20th century. A very talented quartet breathes compellingly organic life script which sometimes paints nuanced details with very broad strokes. Male-female relations are gently drawn against themes of wealth and influence in contemporary society. The drama holds-up quite well. Rebeck's observations on power and gender are every bit as relevant now as they were when this play debuted nearly 30 years ago.

Becky Cofta is effervescently charming as Georgie--a secretary at a law firm in Boston. As the play opens, she has had a tremendously bad day that she REALLY wants to talk about the fact that she doesn't want to talk about. A blue collar waitress who has been turned into a white collar secretary, Georgie is perplexed by the enigma of her own reflection. Every one of her desires seem fundamentally conflicted with each other. Though she is a profoundly sophisticated personality, Rebeck's characterization of Georgie feels like a flat stereotype in quite a few places. Thankfully, Cofta does a brilliant job of selling EVERYTHING that Georgie is including those moments when the character seems to lack depth.

Josh Perkins plays Georgie's friend Andrew. Andrew's a writer. The first part of the play takes place at his apartment. Georgie lives upstairs from him. The two met at the mailboxes. He gave her a book. The friendship has allowed her to advance beyond the life if a waitress. Perkins is intellectually heroic as a man who isn't totally aware of the depth of his feelings for Georgie. The character runs the risk of coming across with crippling pomposity, but Perkins immerses the character's verbosity in a tender vulnerability that keeps him likable even as his inner ugliness emerges.

Cory Jefferson Hagen has considerably more to overcome than Perkins in the role of Georgie's boss Edward. Before he even appears onstage certain things come to light about him that make him come across as being particularly sleazy in the #MeToo era. Rebeck doesn't do him a whole lot of favors with the script. Edward is shamelessly slimy. He even takes pride in his detestability. Cory Jefferson Hagen deftly slides into the character. The actor cleverly casts character's genuine concern for others in a

Russ Bickerstaff

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It's really, really cool to see **Brittany Curran** in a show like this. It seems like she's always in huge ensemble shows. Here she's playing Andrew's fiancée Lydia...a staggeringly precise person who comes from wealth. As she appears onstage, it's been a particularly rough day for her and she's not at all herself. Curran imbues strength and courage into the crumbling perfection of a person born into wealth who just *might* be experiencing one of the worst moments of her life. Curran's emotional strength in the role lends a stunning complexity to her chemistry with Cofta. She overcomes a very endearing stage presence to portray a character who occasionally lapses into casual arrogant cruelty. Like every other character in the ensemble, Lydia is a deeply flawed person. Curran embraces Lydia's flaws on many levels.

Milwaukee Entertainment Group's *Spike Heels* runs through **May 18th** at the **Brumder Mansion** on **3046 West Wisconsin Ave.** For ticket reservations and more, visit [Milwaukee Entertainment. Group online.](#)

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