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Local Theatre Review

Whodunnit? And dunnit... and dunnit again! Not Dead Yet! with MEG

June 20, 2019 | Kimberly Laberge

"You hear that?"
"That's the plot falling apart!"

Milwaukee Entertainment Group's *Not Dead Yet!* is what you'd get if you took a game of *Clue* and threw it in a blender. All of the right elements are there: the mysterious mastermind, the drunken actress, the frazzled help, the argumentative cynic, the flighty heiress, and the jilted lover. There is death upon death, and reasonable motives abound.

However, along the way, the piece goes a tad... awry. Playwright Andrew Peterson describes his work as a "ridiculous and absurdist romp". His script is satire on steroids. A touch heavy on the absurdism, the play erratically jumps from disconnected plot point to showbiz inspired punchlines, and back again. To logically retrace from the end of the play back to the start would be impossible.



The company of *Not Dead Yet!*

Brittany Curran is a welcome highlight as Susie Ditz, the daughter of a wealthy snack cracker mogul. Curran keeps audiences continuously engaged as her Ditz remains three steps behind for the gang's every two steps forward. Her expressiveness invites audiences into the delayed processes of Ditz' brain. Best of all, through it all, the character remains charming and likable.

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Chris Goode, Zach Sharrock, Dennis Lewis, and Cara Johnston.

E. Orr Block is brought to life by Chris Goode. Having resigned all independence to director genius Cameron James Pinehurst III, Block scrambles to keep his wily actors dedicated to Pinehurst's intricate instructions. Goode's performance subtleties nod towards Block's perpetually impending breakdown - a twitch here and there, a squeak in the voice, a faltering smile. As his livelihood (and the plot) crumbles around him with each additional gravestone, Goode's Block fills the room with the only logical response to this play: utter panic.

Actual director Robert A. Zimmerman was handed a challenge with *Not Dead Yet!*, that's certain. The script runs its' bizarre course, but Zimmerman guides it towards a sense of familiarity. He draws attention to patterns in the writing through inventive blocking and design, giving audiences a lifeboat in the storm.

Not Dead Yet! is wild from start to finish, quite literally taking you through the Brumder Mansion. The piece is peculiar, meant for a niche audience. However, with Milwaukee Entertainment Group's reputation for classy theatre in the classy venue, Peterson's wacky script simply feels out of place.

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