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Cartoonish Characters and Zany Comedy in ‘Not Dead Yet’

BY JEAN-GABRIEL FERNANDEZ JUN. 10, 2019 10:47 A.M.

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It takes talent to fake incompetence as the Milwaukee Entertainment Group proves with their newest play, *Not Dead Yet*. The company promises to showcase “the

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this wacky comedy.

The show starts unexpectedly in the lobby, pulling the audience into what could be a thrilling murder-mystery, but the comedic aspect quickly undermines any horrific tones, starting with the absurd names of the characters. Meet Adolf Ebola (Zach Sharrock), who can't figure out why he always plays Nazis; Bernice Is-not-my-name (Amber Regan), whose name causes as many absurd misunderstandings as you might expect; the ditzy Susie Ditz (Brittany Curran); and E. Orr Block (Chis Goode), the subservient, boot-licking assistant to Cameron James Pinehurst III (Dennis Lewis). To complete the cast, Cara Johnston plays the cat woman Ginger Catz, the threat looming over the group. An honorable mention goes to Babyface, the world's richest baby, whose fortune is entirely self-made (he got his first million by the first trimester!).

Although the characters keep dropping dead, there is no real mystery or tension, just laughter. You shouldn't watch *Not Dead Yet* for the plot—in fact, you can distinctly hear it shatter in the last act—but for the entertainment provided by its colorful, unbelievably cartoonish characters. Bernice, for instance, is a constant source of hilarity due to her uninterrupted drinking throughout the entire show; she pulls a surprising amount of wine glasses, vodka bottles and margaritas out of her bag of never-ending alcohol. All the humor is similarly nonsensical, and it often breaks the fourth wall, but top-notch acting keeps the production together. The result is lively and engaging, although it is not very refined.

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was specifically built around the Victorian building, and as the mansion is supposedly haunted, ghosts do end up on stage.

Through June 22 at the Brumder Mansion, 3046 W. Wisconsin Ave. For tickets and more information, visit milwaukeeentertainmentgroup.com.

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