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The Love of Gods and Mortals

BY RUSS BICKERSTAFF FEB. 10, 2020 5:18 P.M.

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Supernatural romance fills a classy space this month as Milwaukee Entertainment Group presents *The Beauty of Psyche* at the Brumder Mansion. Based on ancient Greek myth, local playwright J.J. Gatesman's drama features Brittany Curran as a beautiful woman who's been rescued from certain death by the god Eros. The fantasy of Gatesman's romance between god and mortal is stylishly amplified by the use of abstract puppetry and shadows cast against a white sheet in the warmth and intimacy of the mansion's subterranean stage.

Jake Konrath plays Eros as an abstract, immortal figure largely cast in shadow who holds his love for Psyche at a distance. Curran is engagingly nimble on an emotional level in carrying much of the passion and aggression of the relationship that emerges between god and mortal. Konrath's bold stoicism allows Curran to bring the more active end of the romance to the stage, which she does with a casually heroic grace. Curran humbly takes the center of the stage as a crushingly romantic human hero.

The love emerging between mortal and god is complicated by active disdain from Eros' mother, played with elegantly chilly poise by Shannon Nettlesheim Klein. Upset over the emerging romance, Eros' mother hides him from Psyche. She will allow the heroine to reunite with her son only if she can complete a seemingly impossible quest.

Aiding Psyche in her quest are Kellie Wambold and Paige Bourne as the god Pan and a fairy aide, respectively. Wambold's playfulness whimsically opens the production as Pan welcomes the audience with an introduction. Bourne

adds depth to Wambold’s whimsy with energy that serves as an effervescent foundation for romantic drama.

Through Feb. 22 at the Brumder Mansion, 3046 W. Wisconsin Ave.

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Russ Bickerstaff

Russ Bickerstaff is a theater critic and aspiring author living on the south side with his wife and two daughters.

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