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A Comic 'Death by Design' at the Brumder Mansion

BY RUSS BICKERSTAFF APR. 29, 2022 9:27 A.M.



The beautiful Brumder Mansion serves as a cozy, early 20th century English country manor in the murder mystery comedy *Death By Design*. Director Zach Woods also stars as a playwright named Edward who has escaped the city with his wife, the lovely actress Sorel (played by the equally lovely actress Alicia Rice. Rice is radiant as an actress who is tantalizingly oblivious to so many things that aren't her.) Rice and Woods have delightfully precise chemistry about them as husband and wife who are forced to deal with a steady parade of guests and, regrettably, the eventual homicidal activity.



The crazy energy of a murder mystery farce is maintained by Woods and company from beginning to end. It helps that Woods is working with a really talented cast. In addition to himself and Rice, there's quite a lot of talent ricocheting around in the ensemble. Keighley Sadler is captivatingly intense as the bohemian artist Victoria Van Roth. Sean Duncan is comically stiff in the role of the conservative politician Walter Pearce. Samantha Biatch lends the production a hearty Irish accent in the role of the quick-witted maid Bridgit.

Playwright Rob Urbanati tosses together a variety of different characters and shoves them through a series of weird juxtapositions. In the speed of the comedy, it can often be difficult to attain any coherent sense of individual characters' emotions and motives. Woods has done a brilliant job of fostering an environment that keeps everything remarkably well-defined without losing any comic momentum in the process. It's not an easy thing to manage given the fact that all of the action needs to shoot around itself on one of the smallest, most intimate stages in town.



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Milwaukee Entertainment Group's production of *Death By Design* runs through May 14 at the Brumder Mansion, **3046 W. Wisconsin Ave.** For tickets, visit milwaukeeentertainmentgroup.com.





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The Brumder Mansion

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Death By Design

Saw the play last night and it was great. Outstanding acting and very entertaining.

Rick D 7 hours ago | [reply](#)

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