

artscene

Pestilence

**‘wickedly delicious’ and
‘simply fantastic’**

Special review for **Art Scene Magazine** by freelance critic Lorenzo Sandovol

Just what one needs to make it through the week: a *Pocketful of Pestilence*. No, really! You’ll like it! Go this coming weekend to Vaudeville Mews. *Pestilence* has never been this fun!

You’ll experience the wickedly delicious hilarity of three short plays that poke fun at the overheated but short-lived mating habits of the mayfly, the overblown heroics of classical mythology, and the overly artistic yet woefully underfinanced world of nonprofit theatre.

The actors in the first offering, *Time Flies* by David Ives, ably capture the wackiness and wild wordplay for which Ives is famous. As Horace and May—two mayflies whose romantic passions are constrained by their species’ terrible fate of a 24-hour lifespan—Jerry Hatchitt and Amy Stanwood are excellent in their display of energy and handling of the play’s pun-infused language. Commenting on the couple’s pondside dalliance through scholarly play-by-play is Kyle Chizek as David Attenborough. He, too, turns in a fine performance.

The Frogs, the second play, is an adaptation of Aristophanes’ Greek comedy. True to the ancient genre’s form, this new, smartly-written version satirizes the symbols of daily life and the icons of politics, literature and entertainment. The story revolves around Dionysus’ journey to Hades in his effort to bring back the dead playwright Euripides. With the speed and dizziness of a rollercoaster ride, the story hurls us in multiple directions as we travel in a world filled with ancient figures (Heracles, Pluto, Aeschylus) and knock-offs of modern celebrities (Donald Trump, Carmen Miranda and Eminem). John Busbee heads this talented cast that expertly weaves the vocal lyricism of lingua classica with the staccato of lingua Americana.

Cockroaches inherit the earth in *Joe and Stew’s Theater of Brotherly Love and Financial Success*. Written by Jacqueline Reingold, this little gem, featuring John Busbee and Spencer Gilbert, is a comedic concoction that blends “Waiting for Godot” with Abbott and Costello and tosses in a healthy dose of apocalyptic-movie spirits. Will nonprofit theatre spring eternal in the aftermath of widespread human destruction? It’s in the dozen-plus hands of two hopeful, yet canny cockroaches.

And, in the hands of Frank Burnett, Ann Wilkinson and Thatcher Williams, these three pieces are simply fantastic.