

BLOOD: A COMEDY

Reviews



DYSFUNCTIONAL DELIGHTS

Anita Gates – New York Times

“David Lee White’s “Blood: A Comedy” couldn’t be cleverer as it deals with the onset of Alzheimer’s disease, a soap-opera-style family shocker and reflections on the existence of God. The [Passage Theater Company](#)’s satisfyingly sassy production, a world premiere directed with decided finesse by Adam Immerwahr, introduces us to a painfully honest modern family with outstanding verbal skills. Jacqueline Stanzi (June Ballinger, the company’s executive artistic director) is a college professor who has been yanked out of the classroom after suggesting to a science class that DNA could be proof of intelligent design. This is strange, because Jacqueline has always been a confirmed [atheist](#).”

“‘Blood’ is about family relationships: emotional patterns as well as bloodlines. The most delicious is Franny and Alec’s sibling hostility, because it’s so enthusiastic. Their best zingers cannot be shared here, because the Stanzis are a particularly foulmouthed family. That includes Mom, who periodically turns to the audience and comments on the action, her life or the cosmos.

In the delightful Ms. Ballinger's most memorable monologue, she reports that people who have had near-death experiences and those who practice erotic asphyxiation describe the same phenomenon. Apparently there's more than one way to go into the light."

"Blood: A Comedy" is consistently entertaining. And if you listen very carefully, it does offer a worthwhile thought or two about the meaning of it all."

FAITH MEETS FUNNY

Peter Filichia/For the Star-Ledger

"Theatergoers who don't like pot-shots made at religion might be offended by White's free-for-all stabs at people who believe. For one thing, White establishes that the more biology professor Jacqueline Stanzi loses her mind, the more she finds her faith. When she had no mental problems at all, she was an atheist. Her thirtysomething daughter, Franny, used to be an atheist, too, but she's putting that aside because her new beau, Matthew, is a born-again Christian. White makes sure that Matthew comes across looking mighty silly, too. Of course, as is often the case with farce, everyone winds up looking foolish. Son Alec is a former porn dealer who's now moved on to selling mock marijuana. Matthew's father, Noah, seems as if he spent his whole life smoking the real thing. Franny admits that she "tried to figure out my life through sex." So White is an equal-opportunity insulter of the human condition."

On opening night, much of the audience had a rollickingly good time, exploding with laughs as outrage was piled upon outrage. The crowd adored hearing about how crazy everyone onstage was and relished learning about pyramid schemes and bedroom scandals. Even after Noah delivered a serious diatribe, the laughter quickly resumed and lasted right up to curtain calls."

"In the end, White winds up delivering many muddled messages about religion. That, though, may very well be his point: Who knows for sure what one really should believe?"

REVIEW: BLOOD: A COMEDY AT THE DREAMCATCHER REP THEATRE – NEW YORK THEATER/EXAMINER.COM

Rick Busciglio/Northern New Jersey Theater Examiner

"The mystery is why did this very funny and irreverent gem of a comedy go without a stage for so long?"

"What **David Lee White** has provided is a fascinating, very intimate peek into the lives of two dysfunctional families that are about to be bonded by marriage."

"...what you need to know is that this is a remarkably talented cast, especially **Noreen Farley**, so perfectly cast, and **Jessica O'Hara-Baker**, in a hilariously funny play (especially for the open-minded), beautifully directed by [Laura Ekstrand](#), that could easily make the transition to Broadway without the slightest alteration. This is four-star entertainment."

'BLOOD' IS THICK IN COMEDY AT DREAMCATCHER

By Peter Filichia/For the Star-Ledger

“Playwright David Lee White has penned a very black comedy. Lest anyone miss the point that this play is meant to be funny, White has included a genre definition in the show’s title. It’s not simply “Blood” that’s playing at Dreamcatcher Repertory Theatre in South Orange — it’s “Blood: A Comedy.” When a playwright adds those two words to this title, he’d best be able to deliver hilarity. White does so in this dissection of a dysfunctional family.”

“A newly engaged couple introducing their parents may be a familiar plot — but White’s prodigious gift for gab and gags make him a post-modern Neil Simon.”

“Dedicated New Jersey theatergoers may feel that “Blood: A Comedy” sounds familiar. It was first presented in 2009 at Passage Theatre Company in Trenton. New Jersey artistic directors routinely replicate Manhattan hits at their theaters, but they rarely choose to revive a play that’s only been seen in the Garden State. Ekstrand’s belief in the play is understandable, and her production of it is stellar.”