

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 19 – LIMITED ENGAGEMENT

METAMORPHOSES

Written and directed by

MARY ZIMMERMAN

Based on a translation by David Slavitt of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

**WINNER, 2002 TONY AWARD®
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"BRACINGLY INTELLIGENT...SIZZLINGLY THEATRICAL" – *Variety*

EQUIVOCATION



BY **BILL CAIN**

DIRECTED BY **SEAN GRANEY**

SEP 14 – OCT 14, 2012

**A comic thriller about SHAKESPEARE,
POLITICS and the ART OF LYING.**



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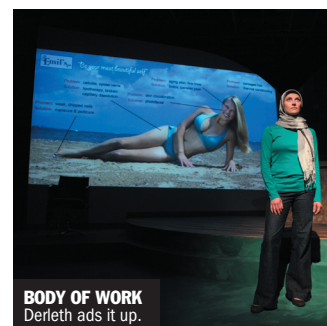
Impenetrable



Stage Left Theatre (see Resident companies). By Mia McCullough. Dir. Greg Werstler. With Melanie Derleth, Jennifer Pompa, Kamal Hans, Emi Clark. 1hr 30mins; no intermission.

Over the summer, a plastic surgery clinic in Caracas, Venezuela, received criticism for an advertisement depicting Ariel from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* having her fish tail surgically removed. The ad's tagline: "We make fairy tales come true." That real-world image sends a troubling message similar to the spa billboard in Mia McCullough's new drama. Spotting an attractive, scantily clad young woman with arrows pointing at potential imperfections and cosmetic methods to change them, the billboard reads: "Be your most beautiful self."

The oversized advertisement causes a public uproar and sparks debate on how the female body is depicted, with model Talya (Melanie Derleth) trapped in the middle. McCullough puts the play's message above character and plot, providing information in a presentational, monologue-heavy style. With actors delivering chunks of text while



BODY OF WORK
Derleth ads it up.

standing next to each other but not interacting, the pace can be plodding. When the playwright sporadically chooses to show rather than tell, these characters rise above the ideological stance they represent and become real people.

Derleth serves as a strong emotional anchor, playing Talya with a steely confidence that shields her vulnerable soul. As a bitter barista trapped in the 'burbs, scene-stealer Jennifer Pompa gets the best one-liners, but is equally sharp during intimate dramatic scenes. Her character has the most distance from the central conflict, allowing Pompa to create a distinct personality that's affected, but not defined, by the words in the advertisement. —*Oliver Sava*

After



Profiles Theatre (see Resident companies). By Chad Beckim. Dir. Matt Hawkins. With ensemble cast. 1hr 30mins; no intermission.

Monty (J. Salomé Martinez) is newly returned to the world, an ex-convict released after nearly two decades in prison. The twist is he never should have been convicted at all. At age 17, he was sent to prison on charges of rape; now, he's been exonerated thanks to DNA evidence and finds himself a 34-year-old unable to navigate the toothbrush aisle or cross the street without someone else telling him to move. He paces the dining-room floor of his deceased parents' house, now occupied only by his sister, Liz (Alice daCunha), who bears some scars of her own from Monty's tribulations.

Chad Beckim's quiet 2011 play offers a genuinely intriguing premise: What must everyday tasks look like to someone who was removed from society before his senior prom, particularly in a wrongful conviction? Martinez, an appealing Los Angeles transplant making his Chicago debut, suggests sublimated feelings roiling beneath his skin, even if his facial expression too often seems limited to a warily cocked eyebrow.



BOXY LADY
Park flirts with Martinez.

But Beckim undercuts his work's subdued effectiveness with a pair of characters whose injections of comic relief feel artificial: a chirpily quirky drugstore clerk who becomes Monty's love interest, and a sulky doggie day-care manager who becomes his employer. Though their portrayals, Stephenie Park and Gabriel Ruiz, do fine work, the characters and Beckim's schematic plot feel calculated in a way that Matt Hawkins's empathetic, up-close staging can't quite disguise. —*Kris Vire*

PHOTOS: TOP, JOHNNY KNIGHT; BOTTOM, MICHAEL BROSLOW