

On December 4, 1956,
they played together for the first and only time...

ELVIS PRESLEY
JERRY LEE LEWIS
CARL PERKINS
JOHNNY CASH

MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET

NOW EXTENDED! THRU SEPT!

CHICAGO'S HIT ROCK 'N' ROLL MUSICAL, INSPIRED BY THE ELECTRIFYING TRUE STORY

APOLLO THEATER

FOR TICKETS CALL 773.935.6100, OR VISIT TICKETMASTER.COM
GROUP DISCOUNTS CALL 312.977.1710

"My father was an extraordinary man.
People loved him, animals loved him,
mosquitoes wouldn't bite him.
But he and I were like strangers
who knew each other well.
That's the thing with strangers.
They can surprise you."

BIG FISH

THE LARGER-THAN-LIFE BROADWAY MUSICAL

FIVE WEEKS ONLY!
NOW PLAYING THROUGH MAY 5

BROADWAYINCHICAGO.COM
800-775-2000 • GROUPS (5): 312-977-1710
ORIENTAL THEATRE

PRE-BROADWAY WORLD PREMIERE



STRUM KNIGHTS The cast plinks out a tune.

SHOW OF THE WEEK

Dawn, Quixote



The Building Stage (see Fringe & storefront). Conceived and dir. Blake Montgomery. With ensemble cast. 1hr 35mins; no intermission.

The hero of Miguel de Cervantes's 17th-century epic famously and foolishly imagines himself a chivalric knight-errant who sees inns as castles to be conquered and windmills as angry giants to battle. Accompanied by simple but loyal sidekick Sancho Panza, Don Quixote sets out to right wrongs, but his efforts are met with bemusement or derision. Director Blake Montgomery and his cast use a familiar Building Stage tactic in their devised adaptation: The ensemble members perform as a collective, sharing and trading roles with a fluid flair. In this case, the three male and three female actors' baseline personas are iterations of Quixote, clad in roughly matching black pantaloons, gray wigs and bushy fake beards and projecting a gung-ho sense of purpose while strumming ukuleles.

The Building Stage has designated *Dawn, Quixote* its final production, after which it will close up shop at its unfortunately secluded West Town home. Cervantes's impossible dreamer makes a wistful mascot for the troupe's terminus, on a set created from shelves stacked high, thrift-shop style, with relics from past productions. The cheeky, spaghetti-Western-flavored retelling can feel a bit thin and more than a little repetitious. Its goofy meandering is no match for the company's sweeping, marathon riff on *The Ring Cycle* or its dynamic encapsulation of *Moby-Dick*.

Yet Montgomery and company's climactic confrontation with Cervantes's decisive conclusion (in which the protagonist is shaken out of his madness, settles down and undramatically dies) plays a moving metatheatrical card. These men and women of La Mancha rewrite that ending. In their cheery, closing uke rendition of "Mamas, Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys," they suggest that closing a chapter doesn't have to mean giving up on a dream. —Kris Vire

The Bacchae Revisited



Right Brain Project (see Fringe & storefront). Devised by the cast. Dir. Nathan Robbel. With ensemble cast. 1hr 25mins; no intermission.

In *The Bacchae*, Euripides relies on messengers and the chorus to relate what's taking place on Mt. Cithaeron, where the frenzied women of Thebes—under the influence of Dionysus—have gone to get drunk, get naked, tear wild animals apart with their bare hands and otherwise freak out the menfolk. In this revisionist retelling of the tragedy, director Nathan Robbel puts these orgiastic rites front and center. No longer are the women possessed by a god out for revenge against the Theban ruler, Pentheus; instead, they're looking to escape the controlling men in their lives.

As a result, much of the show feels like an outdoor self-empowerment workshop led by New Age types. "I came to let my beast free," says one bacchant. "I came to sing lost songs," says another. There are some lovely passages early on about throwing off the obligations imposed on them and getting back to nature, and Robbel cleverly stages an orgy seen only in flashes of light from a match. But once the celebration gets going in earnest, all the chanting, moaning, breast beating and breast baring quickly grow tedious. The fact that 19 cast members (some of whom go nude for nearly the entire show) have been crammed into the Right Brain Project's tiny space adds an appropriate element of chaos but also turns the production into a crowded muddle. Euripides gets lost in a tangle of writhing limbs. —Zac Thompson

PHOTO: BLAKE MONTGOMERY