

Xanadu



Drury Lane Oakbrook Terrace (see Resident companies). Book by Douglas Carter Beane. Music and lyrics by Jeff Lynne and John Farrar. Dir. Rachel Rockwell. With Gina Milo, Chris Critelli, Christine Sherrill, Nancy Voigts, Gene Weygandt. 2hrs; one intermission.

I've wondered at least since my first viewing a few years back if *Xanadu* the stage musical reaches the diminishing-returns level of Parody Ouroboros. I was familiar with the source, the gloriously inept 1980 film musical starring Olivia Newton-John as a Greek muse come to life as a Venice Beach roller-disco babe. But to those unaware of the Hollywood bomb and its cult-camp status, would waggish playwright Douglas Carter Beane's almost egregiously self-referential book and repurposing of ELO songs like "Magic" and, uh, "Strange Magic" be exclusionary satire eating itself?

The musical's opening scene, as blunt and bewildering as the movie's, doesn't help ease audiences in. My companion, an ardent fan of the film in all its ridiculousness, was overjoyed by the play's cheeky explanation for the Greek muse's Australian accent



XANA-DUO
Critelli and Milo go for a couples' skate.

(and outstanding comic lead Gina Milo's vocal impression of ONJ), but others around us seemed initially impervious to the attempts of Rachel Rockwell's hardworking cast.

Still, in *Xanadu* did Carter Beane a greatly clever foam set free. Resistance to its frothy, lightweight charms proves futile. One might wish the playwright were more generous with the male lead, underwritten himbo Sonny (played here by the game and talented Chris Critelli), yet *Xanadu* the musical charts plenty of shallow but unexpected pleasures.—*Kris Vire*

Listings

If you want to be listed

Submit information by mail, e-mail (theater@timeoutchicago.com) or fax (312-924-9350) to **Oliver Sava**. Include details, dates, times, address of venue with cross streets, nearest El station and bus routes, contact information, box-office phone number and admission price, if any. **Deadline is 9am Monday, ten days before publication date.**

- Reviewed in this issue
- * Recommended or notable
- ♫ Musical or song-based play
- ♦ Cheap

Touring shows

***Freud's Last Session** *Mercury Theater*, 3745 N Southport Ave (773-325-1700, freudslastsession.com). Wed 2, 7:30pm; Thu 7:30pm; Fri 8pm; Sat 2, 8pm; Sun 1, 5pm. \$45–\$55, students \$22. 1hr 25mins; no intermission. Through Nov 11. Mark St. Germain's two-hander has an undeniably intriguing hook: an imagined meeting between Sigmund Freud and C.S. Lewis. The natural concern in a setup like this is talkiness, and St. Germain's dialogue can devolve to debating points. But despite the blatant contrivances required to get these men in the same room, the setting is useful; Britain's anticipation of Chamberlain's speech on the morning of September 3, 1939, provides enough dramatic tension to keep the play from feeling like a forensics tournament. Mike

Nussbaum and Coburn Goss step into the roles of Freud and Lewis, respectively, for the play's extension.—*Kris Vire*

I Love Lucy: Live on Stage *Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place*, 175 E Chestnut St (312-977-1710, broadwayinchicago.com). Wed 2, 7:30pm; Thu, Fri 7:30pm; Sat 2, 8pm; Sun 2, 6pm. \$23–\$65. Through Nov 11. *I Love Lucy* has nearly disappeared from television, but this live show presents two classic episodes for those looking to satisfy their Lucille Ball cravings.

OPENING **The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart** *The National Theatre of Scotland at Chicago Shakespeare Theater*, 800 E Grand Ave (312-595-5600, chicagoshares.com). Previews Wed 26. Opens Sept 27 at 7:30pm. Tue–Fri 7:30pm; Sat 3, 7:30pm; Sun 3pm. \$45–\$60. Through Oct 14. On a dreamlike journey to self-discovery, Prudencia Hart navigates through a world of poetry, demons and karaoke in David Greig's musical drama. Wils Wilson of the National Theatre of Scotland directs as part of CST's World's Stage series.

Resident companies

After Profiles *Theatre Alley Stage*, 4147 N Broadway (773-549-1815, profilestheatre.org). Thu, Fri 8pm; Sat 5, 8pm; Sun 7pm. \$35–\$40. 1hr 30mins; no intermission. Through Oct 14. 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. Chad Beckim's quiet 2011 play offers a genuinely intriguing premise: What must everyday

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DIRECTED BY CHAY YEW

Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn

EVENING 2 FEBRUARY 13, 2013

RECEPTION: 5:30PM

N9NE Steakhouse, 440 W. Randolph

TEDDY FERRARA: 7:30PM

BY CHRISTOPHER SHINN

DIRECTED BY EVAN CABNET

Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn

EVENING 3 APRIL 24, 2013

RECEPTION: 5:30PM

Sopraffina Marketcaffè, 10 N. Dearborn

THE HAPPIEST SONG PLAYS LAST: 7:30PM

BY QUIARA ALEGRÍA HUDES

DIRECTED BY EDWARD TORRES

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