

CABELL & BAILLIE "ONSTAGE"

**BROADWAY'S ONLY
DUELLING CRITICS
PRAISE AND PAN GOTHAM'S
LATEST THEATRICAL OFFERINGS**



SHOPPING AND FUCKING

Dysfunctional Theatre

New York Theatre Workshop, 79 East 4th Street

Cabell: zip, nada, nothing, no star

Baillie: 1/2★

Over the years many English plays and musicals have come over the Atlantic to make a big splash here, but the Royal Court Theatre/Out of Joint production, written by Mark Ravenhill should have been denied entry.

Cabell: *Shopping and Fucking* is enough to scare anyone out of the theatre for the rest of this century.

Baillie: Catchy title: take two popular activities and put them on a marquee.

C: I have never, in 20 years of New York theatre, walked out on a show during intermission. Never. This was my first.

B: I doubt that.

C: Well, not counting a bad strip joint.

B: There isn't much that I will not sit through. I mean, I sat through both acts of *Queens Boulevard*!

C: Far too many theatrical productions are based on grants which are all politically correct or ethnically angry or like this avant-garde mindless vulgarity.

B: Get off the soap box and talk about the show. My complaint is not with the acting. These are strong and capable actors.

C: It's a superb ensemble cast. Elizabeth Marvel as the desperate and proverbially victimized Lulu and Timothy Mitchel as the acid-brained Peter Pan are gritty and real.

B: Marvel has a sultry, sexy presence and Jay Goede is captivating as Mark, trying to find his way out of the chaos of his life.

C: Goede is sensual and touching as the neurotic and dysfunctional



A better title would be Tacky and Taste Free.

Mark, but I find it offensive that talented actors and actresses are wasted in this production. Directors Gemma Bodinetz and Max Stafford-Clark certainly didn't mistreat the material, they probably elevated it. I can't even say that Mark Ravenhill is without talent. It takes a good writer to create such nauseating and offensive material.

B: A better title would have been Tacky and Taste Free.

SHOUT 31

ART

Picture Perfect

Cabell & Baillie: ★★★★★

What happens when three old friends examine their friendship based on their tastes in art?

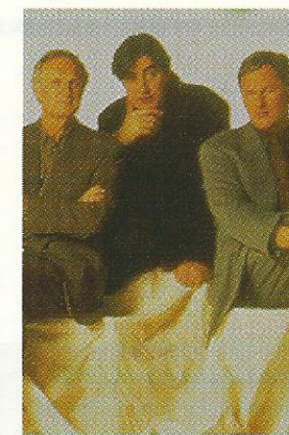
Cabell: Alan Alda, Victor Garber, and Alfred Molina are picture perfect in this new comedy by French playwright Yasmina Reza. Serge (Garber) invites Marc (Alda) over to admire his new exciting piece of modern art: a white painting with white diagonal lines.

Baillie: Marc calls the 200,000 franc painting a joke and the play begins. I don't know why the play remained set in France, but I got past that pretty quickly.

C: Anyway, they argue about the painting until angst-ridden, groom-to-be Yvan (Molina) shows up. His mid-show speech over the tyrannical matriarchal tirades that drive doomed bachelors from here to insanity is the highlight of the evening.

B: You mean, he was a little nervous? But you are right. Molina had a number of the highlights of the one act play. Yvan is the middle-of-the-road guy who tries to make everyone happy, even at his own expense. This really remarkable play cleverly takes us through various levels of discovery until the true reason for their animosity is uncovered while using the painting as the catalyst.

C: The laughs in this show flow effortlessly, through beats, double takes, verbal repartee, abuse, silent business, and petty bickering.



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should reevaluate
your appreciation
of modern art.**

B: Matthew Warchus' clean direction allowed the actors to maximize the text in their choices. I really loved that the set, by Mark Thompson, clearly reflected the three different characters. Three chairs, one traditional, one comfy, and one modern, set around a large coffee table (about the size of the painting). Really slick!

C: Thompson created a perfect landscape for Hugh Vansone's lighting. His use of primary colors against the neutral background, and the subliminal pattern of venetian blinds against the wall, are most eloquent.

B: Garber, one of our most versatile actors, is captivating as Serge. He makes you wonder if you should reevaluate your appreciation of modern art (if you have any) and your friends.

C: Alan Alda is perfect as Marc. His biting satirical Hawkeye humor is in fighting form as he badgers and then ingratiates his way through his friends cultural veneer and acquired vernacular.

B: The brightest moments (and there are plenty) belong to Alfred Molina. The other bright moment of the night was when Whoopi Goldberg came in and sat next to me during the performance! She was cool.

C: Name dropper. *Art* is a picture perfect show.

B: Reza has written a beautiful play which works on all levels. Friendships require as much love and attention as any romantic relationship, probably more. *Art* is a masterpiece.

THE SUNSHINE BOYS

Clouded With Trouble

Cabell: ★★

Baillie: ★

Delightful Tony Randall and Jack Klugman pair in this Neil Simon classic about two grumpy old vaudeville stars, carrying an 11-year grudge, who are reunited for a TV special by Klugman's agent/nephew.

Baillie: As much as I have enjoyed these two veteran actors in other roles, I cannot excuse this sloppy production.

Cabell: It is difficult to fairly review a show when, from the first word uttered, you're painfully aware one of the leading characters is physically incapable of truly delivering the performance.

B: Absolutely, they have an immediate rapport but, Klugman cannot stand up to the role vocally.

C: Klugman survived throat cancer; his voice did not. It is dry, crackling, and weak; yet his mind, body, and timing are not.

B: Tony Randall's performance is clear and precise with impeccable timing. The two play Lewis and Clark, a comedy team who had worked together for 43 years, the last 11 without speaking to each other except on stage. The highlight of the night is the scene where they arrange the set for their doctor skit. They didn't speak a word,



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aside from grunts, which is why it worked. Two comic actors at their best. Unfortunately one great scene doesn't make up for the rest.

C: I was truly impressed by Randall's unique and individual characterization, light years away from Felix Unger of *Odd Couple* days.

B: Dashing Matthew Arkin (the youngest of the Arkin dynasty), is charming as Clark's nephew/agent. Peggy Joyce Crosby is forgettable as the buxom nurse who wiggles around.

C: And she has a lot to wiggle... ba-dump-bump. Stephen Beach's performance as Eddie is brief but memorable as the stagehand who has to deal with these two old codgers, and Ebony Jo-Ann is a perfect candy-gobbling, no-nonsense nurse.

B: If you do a Neil Simon play, they will come. If you put Jack Klugman and Tony Randall together, they will come. Too bad it is a disappointment.

C: But I still enjoyed it. If you wish to see *The Sunshine Boys*, rent the movie. If you wish to see that Klugman and Randall "Odd Couple" chemistry one more time, take a buddy and have a great time.