

FRINGE REVIEW: SKUNKWEED

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SKUNKWEED

Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace

Rating: **NNNN**

In this dramatic comedy by Eric Bogosian (of Talk Radio fame), a TV writer from L.A. named Jerry (Chris Whitby), who's battling a middle-age slump, takes a trip to Florida to clear his mind. On his final night he meets Jo-Ellen (Melanie Pyne), with whom he has a fling and then suffers consequences doled out by her brother and his friends.

Across the board, the acting in this seven-person production is excellent. In less capable hands, all the characters could easily become caricatures. Pyne

injects Jo-Ellen with pathos but also some hope, and Whitby's Jerry is more than just a whiny Hollywood rich guy. Brandon James Sim also stands out as a sycophant sidekick with hidden Hollywood dreams.

The play does a great job of contrasting social and class inequities without getting preachy. Director Adam Bailey keeps the pacing swift and the dialogue flowing. Triple Bypass Productions is a company to watch.

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