



FLIES IN THE SNUFFBOX

Tonic Productions at the Dorothy Strelsin Theatre as part of the Midtown International Theatre Festival

Three outstanding performances—one in each of the three one-act Chekhov plays that make up this bill—almost but not quite redeem the enterprise. As the hapless suitor in *The Proposal*, Chance Mullen is touching in his bombast. Rick Delaney, the sole actor in *On the Harmfulness of Tobacco*, hilariously and believably turns his reluctant purported lecture into a nervous breakdown. And Rhett Henckel in the title role of *The Bear* beautifully conveys the dichotomy of unwelcome intruder turned irresistible sex object.

The rest of the production is flawed by an awkward, anachronistic translation by director Dustin Condren that would have 19th-century landowners go “belly up” and refers to women as “skirts” who carry or don’t carry money “on” them, this despite the uncredited costumes being resolutely in period. (A complete updating of Chekhov would be another, unwelcome, matter.) The show is further brought down by a firm belief that yelling is comedy.

*Presented by Tonic Productions as part of the Midtown International Theatre Festival
at the Dorothy Strelsin Theatre, 312 W. 36th St., NYC.*

*July 14–Aug. 3. Remaining performances: Sat., July 19, 1 p.m.; Sat., July 26, 7:30 p.m.; Thu., July 31, 8:30 p.m.; Fri., Aug. 1, 7:15 p.m.;
Sun., Aug. 3, 6:45 p.m.*

(212) 279-4200 or www.ticketcentral.com.

Reviewed by Robert Windeler

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