Motif MAGAZINE

[theatre]

by Michael Pugliese

Pent-a-gog-go a creative firestorm

Play: noun, or verb? The five short, extremely new plays that make up pent.a.go.go fully exploit both usages. Elemental Theatre's latest experiment links these plays via "objects, events, and dramatic structures," and the connections are always clever and occasionally quite subtle. But whether the pieces are chaotic, comedic, or tragic (sometimes all three at once) there's an overarching sense of play, of fun about the whole experience.

Alexander Platt's *Prophet Margin,* a slippery bit of madness that sticks a sewing box worth of pins into the voodoo dolls of capitalism and technology, stands tall on the twin pillars of Platt's wickedly sharp dialogue and the organic dynamism that binds ! (Bobby Casey) and @ (Melissa Scott). Casey's manic, trippy performance is balanced perfectly by Scott's lost soul of a partner.

Less engaging, for mostly structural reasons, were *Bun Voyage* and *Eurydice Goes to College.* Bun Voyage is the more successful of the two, bringing together a grown woman and her lost childhood via the figure of a forgotten toy. Tray Gearing is convincing as Kate, returning home to inventory her parents' house, as she deals with the sudden appearance of her stuffed rabbit, large and quite real, and Melissa Bowler's Bunny manages to always exist as both a doll and an extension of Kate's psyche. This play, however, seems to be asking for more room, as if there are possibilities left unexplored. I wondered about Kate's parents, and her

daughter.

If *Bun Voyage* wants to stretch out a bit, *Eurydice Goes to College* flails wildly for space. Ree (Jillian Blevins) and Lexie (Elizabeth Gotauco), lifelong friends who find themselves growing apart, and even Hayden (Tom Bentley), Ree's paramour, are complex characters (though I have severe doubts about Hayden's athletically inspired chastity) who struggle mightily to realize everything demanded of them by the script in time. Author Nehassaiu Degannes packs so much in here that the theatre feels like it's about to burst its walls, and this play demands to be re-conceived in two or even three acts.

There could be no greater contrast to Eurydice than D'arcy Dersham's Spokane, the entirety of which happens in one room and leaves the viewer with more questions than answers. Normally, this would be unsatisfying, but Kelly Seigh's ferocious performance as the alcoholic burn out Meg, the hints of tenderness beneath her bru-

tality, and the twisted relationships she maintains with Dersham's mousy sister/lover Faith and her enabler Will (Bobby Casey) weld this play into its hellish, fragmented present, which cracks only briefly for the Chambermaid's (Danielle Scholle) arresting dance into the past. Spokane engenders the same desire for more as Bun Voyage, but where the latter is sweetly poignant, the former burns like raw gin.

A match for Platt's wit in *Prophet Margin* and the heavyweight champ of lunatic joy is David Rabinow's *Regenesis,* a wonderfully imaginative, fiercely intelligent stomp through the Apocalypse. Bookending the show, Prophet Margin and Regenesis comment on each other, as they examine some key myths that undergird our culture. *Regenesis* conceives an encounter between an immortal Eve (Dersham) and Superman (Chris Rosenquest) with an Adam (Platt) unlike any you've ever seen thrown in for good measure. Through these towering figures, Rabinow deftly explores guilt, masculinity, good and evil, self-sacrifice, God's existence, the possibility of redemption, and superhero sex. To attempt this and make any sense is tough enough. To be consistently funny while doing it is miraculous, but borne upon Rosenquest's and Dersham's fearless abandon, Regenesis winds up the show in a blaze. Overall, *Pent.a.go.go* is a firestorm of creative energy, and you smile through the ashes.