

ReAct with "The Shape of Things" by Neil Labute.

Judith van Praag

It's all about boundaries, and the distance people are willing to go for relationships, love, and for art. "The Shape of Things," mounted at the Richard Hugo House on Capitol Hill, by local theater company ReAct, under direction of David Hsieh, starts with Evelyn (Angela DiMarco) stepping over the barrier cord at an art exhibit, spray can in hand. You immediately know, this character is out to shock, ready to make a statement, and an indelible impression on the audience.

The gallery guard, Adam (David S. Hogan), a dorky English major, badly dressed and horribly groomed, is enticed to ask for the telephone number of the attractive and forward Evelyn.

Would you buy that, a schmuck being picked up by a pretty girl? Adam himself has a hard time understanding what the beautiful graduate art student sees in him. And he's not alone in that; his best pal Philip (Jeffrey Grimm, "Six Feet Under"), who is about to take the plunge, marry his sweetheart Jenny (Mona Leach, of Sex in Seattle: Episode 9) questions the whole affair. But when Evelyn and Adam kiss (DiMarco and Hogan are married in real life), "Ooh, fire!" PDA (public display of affection) abounds. Oh, yes, this is a sexy play.

However, The Shape of Things is much more than that. With brazen and manipulative Evelyn (by never-faltering DiMarco), impressionable Adam (though Hogan quit law school, I can see him in any role on "Law & Order") and his corruptible friends Philip and Jenny, playwright/ director Neil Labute ("In the Company of Men," "Nurse Betty") challenges our notions about role patterns and morale. These highly compatible actors make Labute's statements believable all the way.

David Hsieh's stage directions for both main and minor characters (Jessica Knippel, Agastya Kohli, Jane Moon, Lionel

Sam and Evan Tucker double as passersby and back stage crew) in the clever, versatile set, result in a smooth choreography. His attention for detail is eagerly mirrored by all of the participating actors.

The play's theme –transformation– is carried on in David Hsieh's set design as well as the actors' wardrobe changes. The big shift in everybody's conscience –both on stage and in the auditorium– comes with Dimarco's strong deliverance of her character's graduate thesis speech. A big bang if there ever was one.

"The Shape of Things" by ReAct (the Repertory Actors Theatre, Pacific Northwest's only Multiethnic and Philanthropic Theatre Company) is performed at the Main Stage, Richard Hugo House, 1634 Eleventh Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122.

Performances through March 26. Thursdays at 7:30, Fridays at 8, Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m. \$12 Adult; \$9 Student, Military & Disabled; \$6 Children 11 and under. For info on auditions, upcoming shows, special donor campaigns and tickets visit www.reacttheatre.org.

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