

Theatre Reviews



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Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love is a creep-out thriller

By [Colin Thomas](#)

By Brad Fraser. Directed by Sabrina Evertt. A Twenty-Something Theatre production. At the Playwrights Theatre Centre Studio on Friday, August 28. Continues until September 6

Brad Fraser's script is chopped up and bleeding in this production from Twenty-Something Theatre, but there's still life in the body.

Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love is a creep-out thriller—a serial killer is murdering women—and the script's sense of threat emerges in a world defined by murkiness about sexual identity. David, the central character, has lots of sex with other men, but does he know how to love anybody other than his misogynist straight pal, Bernie? Why the hell does Bernie get drunk and sleep beside David, and what about Kane, the 17-year-old busboy from the restaurant where David's a server? Kane *claims* to be straight. But so does Candy, David's roommate, and she sleeps with both the lesbian Jerry and the bartender Robert.

These characters all lie. They're all between worlds in some way and they require a sophisticated touch. Sometimes they get it in this mounting. Kirsten Kilburn nails it as Candy. She subtly reveals the character's brittleness—both her glossy surface and her fragile interior. Sebastian Kroon's performance gives the intriguing sense that Bernie is hiding something that may or may not be malevolent; his swagger is just a bit too jovial. And, in an understated portrait, Joel Sturrock makes Kane's innocence credible. Tara Pratt is also admirably simple in the moony role of Jerri, and Kevan Kase makes a solid—and potentially threatening—Robert.

Rob Monk is frankly awful as David, however. He's showy, he chops up his rhythms, and his physicality is all over the place. David is at the heart of the show, so this is a big deal. Emilie Leclerc also overacts, making David's friend, Benita, superficially loony.

Ultimately, director Sabrina Evertt is responsible for the disparity in performance styles. She's also responsible for crippling Fraser's script with erratic pacing. This play is not easy to mount; characters who aren't in scenes often interject words and phrases. Stylistically, this can be rich, but Evertt makes it distracting by over-staging the interruptions. Sometimes interjecting characters make entrances. More often, we see them lit in various colours behind the groovily opaque walls of Jergus Oprsal's set. This fuss destroys the play's focus and flow. Individual scenes are also oddly paced and sometimes melodramatically directed.

Mostly because the rhythms are so screwed up, the evening doesn't work.