



FRINGE & PURGE

'Black Jew Dialogues'

Posted by Sheffy Gordon on Jul. 17, 2008 at 12:33 pm

Black Jew Dialogues

Warehouse – Main Stage

Remaining Performances:

Thursday, July 17 @ 5:00 PM; Friday, July 18 @ MIDNIGHT

Saturday, July 19 @ 9:30 PM; Sunday, July 20 @ 2:30 PM

They say: "Who knew that rednecks, slavery, bar mitzvahs, and chicken livers were so funny! Hilarious multimedia romp of sketches, improv, theatre, and video, which reveal the absurdity of prejudice and hate. Has toured the US and UK to rave reviews."

Sheffy's take: No, Sammy Davis Jr. is not talking to another black Jew. This show (whose title is missing a "J" between "Black" and "Jew") stars improv comedians Ron Jones (the black guy) and Larry Jay Tish (the Jewish guy) in an abbreviated version of their *Dialogues*. This must-see Fringe treat puts "PC" back into ethnic stereotype.

I hate to admit it, but I usually force myself to laugh at stand-up comedians because I can't actually figure out what everyone else thinks is so funny. Not here—I didn't have to fake a single snigger in what was easily the most entertaining Fringe show I've seen to date. The personalities portrayed by the talented Jones and Tish, their hand puppet alter egos, their racist-but-adorable-granny costumes, and even pre-recorded video projections of themselves that join the conversation fill the stage with enough racists to populate a grand jury in Louisiana. The key to comedy is timing and every movement has been carefully engineered to allow the actors to zip through a myriad of characters—to squeeze it all in, they talk right over their incessant costume changes. As they try to catch their breath between sketches, pre-recorded street interviews illustrate the cultural gulf they are trying to bridge.

As a well-traveled touring show, the performance is almost rote, yet at times they seamlessly switch to improvisation. Aside from an outdated Barry Bonds quip, the references are not yet stale, but there's room for new material. A word to the wise: the theater was close to full, and it may sell out as word spreads. If you come early to claim a seat, a slideshow of witty aphorisms and black/Jew trivia whets your appetite.

Despite starting the show by telling audiences to "Turn off your cell phones; turn off your prejudices," making comedy about racism without offending anyone (besides rednecks) takes chutzpah. They succeed because they earnestly want to engage the community in a dialogue about race and culture, and their commitment shines through.

See it if: You liked *Avenue Q* but didn't understand that the "monsters" were people of color... or if you want to learn how to wear a yarmulke on a Fro.

Skip it if: You've got something else so important that you can't take an hour from your busy schedule... I'm not your mother so I can't tell you what to do, but you're only hurting yourself (and you'll be haunted by Jewish guilt for the rest of your life).

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