



Against the Wall, a new play by three-time Best of Fest Winner Primrose Madayag Knazan.

Lies!

Travis Bernhardt—Son of Warehouse

The ever-charming magician, Travis Bernhardt, has returned with another show of tricks and illusions with all of the lovable humor he brought last year.

Opening the show by pulling limes repeatedly from a handkerchief sounds very impressive, but it's just the beginning of the tricks as he pulls people from the audience and uses them in amazing pieces of sleight of hand. I was fortunate enough to experience the last of his audience participation bits, and watched him move a coat hanger through my arm like it wasn't even there. Well, felt him move it. Overall, very, very exciting with very impressive magic and full of hilarious jokes.

Arden Pruden

Vernus Says SURPRISE

Fringetastic!—Planetarium

What initially struck me about this show was how adorable it seemed to be. I was not disappointed.

Vernus, the elderly gentleman who cares immensely for his granddaughter, has a few problems with technology on his way to the toy store; but he is wonderfully kind-hearted; and as you watch, you want him to succeed so badly.

This play takes you through the day of his granddaughter's birthday dinner as he tries to find her exactly what she wants. A hilarious mimed scene at his home starts the show, and soon he ventures out into the world and the toy store, facing everyday challenges with a smile and a nod. Truly heartwarming, and sweet, a show to see with the family.

Arden Pruden

The Greatest Guitarist in the World

Colin Godbout—Johnny G's

First of all, the performer has changed the name of this show. Contrary to the program, it is now called *The Greatest Guitarist in the World* (singular). There is a reason for this, made clear at the very end of the show. I won't say what it is, but I will mention what it isn't—he is not singling out any of the six musicians the show is about at the expense of the others, nor is the charmingly modest Godbout anywhere near arrogant enough to claim the title for himself.

Godbout gives—both verbally and via his outstanding guitar playing—his interpretations of the work of six of the most important non-classical guitarists of the last century or so, namely Django Reinhardt, Chet Atkins, Lenny Breau, Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Jimmy Page. There is a noticeable-if-you're-looking-for-it emphasis on how each incorporates themes of religion or at least spirituality, but it won't get in the way if you're just here to enjoy the music.

He first discusses the importance of Django and Atkins before treating the audience to lengthy medleys of some of the best work of each of them; the Django one in particular is an absolute delight.

Next comes a section on the improbable pairing of Breau and Hendrix, which is really about (and, partially, in character as) Breau, with a lot of attention to how he interpreted, or might have interpreted, some of Hendrix's best-known work. Even though I find Breau, overall, the least exciting of the six guitarists, Godbout's clever and unexpected juxtapositions kept this part interesting.

The third and last of the three main sections is another long medley, juxtaposing some of Page's best-known Zeppelin work with a rather surprising assortment of Clapton songs which includes a

couple of well-known hits, but also some deeper cuts. I found this third section less inspired than the previous two, though Godbout's playing remains as unassailable here as elsewhere.

I would say the highlight of the show comes at the very end, with a version of "All Along the Watchtower" that is in no way an imitation of Hendrix's version, and in fact incorporates elements of all six styles, and more besides, into a heady mixture that can only be described as Godbout's own.

The program bears comment as well; it's one of the more interesting ones you're likely to see this Fringe. It provides a decent introduction to all six guitarists, though Godbout warned me before the show that you might not want to believe everything it says about Hendrix. I'll probably hang onto it after the festival, even though the overwhelming majority of my programs for individual shows go in the recycle bin the Monday after the Fringe, if not sooner.

My only major criticism is of the sound mixing, which Godbout handles himself, largely with his feet, which makes it unsurprising that it was less than perfect. There's no problem when it's just Godbout's guitar, or even guitar and voice, but prerecorded sound effects overwhelmed the guitar playing at certain points, especially on Breau's "Tunjiji".

Still, this issue affected maybe 90 seconds of a one-hour show, and in any case, Godbout may well have fixed this since I saw it. It is not a major detraction from a performance that I would strongly recommend to anyone with an interest in guitar playing in general, or in any of the seven (counting Godbout himself) excellent guitarists featured here, in particular.

Jeff Heikkinen

