

On 3/8/07 10:53 AM, "Branson Eckles" wrote:

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Branson Eckles, and I've been an avid fan of progressive and alternative-lifestyle theater for thirty years. I recently re-located to Phoenix from Manhattan, where I experienced - almost entirely - a myriad brand of intelligent, well-produced theater.

Upon my arrival in the Valley, I was introduced, through a well-intentioned yet unknowing friend, to what she felt was an up-and-coming theatrical company called Insurrection Theater.

Finding the name and suggestion of my friend intriguing enough, I went to www.insurrectiontheater.com <<http://www.insurrectiontheater.com>> to find out about upcoming shows and try to involve myself with what sounded like the right place to go for an open-minded individual such as myself.

I never thought I'd write a letter such as this; normally my views are extremely liberal, especially when it comes to the arts.

However, upon inspection of the company's website, I find it imperically necessary to write to you and inform you of the preposterous, irresponsible goings-on of Insurrection Theater, and hope that this message can be passed along to discriminating theater-goers.

The next production the theater is putting on is devoid of artistic value, and should be boycotted by anyone that considers themselves to be of moderate taste and intelligence. It is called "The Taboo Festival", and the tagline is simply astonishing:

"The Taboo Festival is a series of one-act plays that will insult your intelligence, offend your principles, and have underage premarital sex with your morals...and you'll like it!"

In and of themselves, the subjects of bisexuality and polyamory, to name just two of the subjects Insurrection Theater claims to be exploring, are not and should not be offensive. Education is inexplicably important in the case of these "taboo" issues. However, it is plainly obvious that if these topics are excessively exploited - and assuredly, they will be - even seasoned theater aficionados (not to mention casual and new fans) will be permanently scarred and will never give live performance art another thought.

This, as you can see, is terribly damaging to our community, not just locally but globally, in that when someone takes the opportunity to see a live show rather than go to a movie or watch a reality television show, we must, as a whole, patrol ourselves in order to assure what one will encounter theatrically will not be degenerate, reprehensible rubbish.

Please pass along these words to whomever will listen.

Insurrection Theater is a disgrace, and patronage of their productions is less educationally and artistically-valuable than a pack of jumbo hot dogs.

Cordially concerned,

Branson M. Eckles

Mr. Eckles,

As a fellow native New Yorker and consistent supporter of alternative theatre, I thank you for your letter. My schedule did not allow me to attend and review the current production of which you speak, but this fledgling company did mount a production earlier this season that I did enjoy.

What I am confused by is your extremely strong condemnation of *advertising*. Have you seen the show? Your email leads me to believe you have not. I could understand an impassioned plea to avoid a production that you've attended because of dubious, salacious, or exploitative merit, but I'm confused by your insisting on a boycott of a collection of performances whose *tag lines and self-descriptions* you view offensive. It reminds me of those who gleefully throw *The Catcher in the Rye* and *Huck Finn* onto the fire because they've been told that it is degenerate literature without having actually read it for themselves.

For a start-up company in this town, especially one with the type of way-off-center fare that Insurrection presents, it's best to get the facts out up front rather than watch the generally-conservative audiences of this town flow out the doors after the first ten minutes. I can say that it all sounds pretty graphic and may not be to a lot of people's (even my own) tastes, but it features a play that is written by an Arizona-based playwright, and since I support all theatre endeavors

(especially local ones), I for one won't pass along the condemnation that you suggested, "Insurrection Theater is a disgrace, and patronage of their productions is less educationally and artistically-valuable than a pack of jumbo hot dogs" until I've actually **witnessed** this to be true.

I'd also suggest, if you'd like people not to brand you as a closed-minded reactionary, that you do the same.

Welcome to Arizona,

Mark S.P. Turvin

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