



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2019

MICHAEL GILTZ AT WORK

THEATER: "Einstein's Dreams" Too Elusive For Reality

EINSTEIN'S DREAMS * 1/2 out of ****

PROSPECT THEATER COMPANY AT 59E59

Alan Lightman's charming novel *Einstein's Dreams* was a best-selling sensation in 1992. Lightman's day job is a physicist and his first and best work of fiction playfully combines both disciplines. In it, he imagines Einstein is working on his Theory of Relativity and dreams about the various ways one can think about time. What if time really did stand still? What if time proceeded in circles? Or skipped and stuttered or reversed itself unexpectedly? Each dream of time is captured in a fragmentary passage lasting just a few pages at most. It's not really a novel or even a collection of short stories, but more like a variation on a theme.

Lightman lets you feel you grasp certain abstract scientific ideas, all while entertaining you thoroughly. But there's no plot to speak of, no over-arching thread. It's just fanciful fun. Even the packaging of the book added to its appeal: *Einstein's Dream* was about 5 inches wide by 7 inches tall, almost a square, friendly little book. It fit into your hands comfortably and made this Italo Calvino-like work quite approachable. Instead of thinking, a book about physics and running away, you saw it and smiled and picked it up.

I read it, I enjoyed it and not for a single moment did I think, this should be adapted for the stage! It's one of those works that would seem to resist a transformation into film or theater or TV. Of course, I felt the same about Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Turn that daunting, philosophical novel into a film? Absurd! Turn the classic Powell-Pressburger movie *A Matter Of Life and Death* into a stage play? Ridiculous!

Well, as a film, *Unbearable* became another masterpiece. As a play, *A Matter Of Life and Death* was a disaster. But hey, they tried! So



Michael Giltz is a freelance writer based in NYC and can be reached at mgiltz@pipeline.com

FAVORITE LINKS

[Americablog](#)
[Five O'Clock Lightning baseball blog](#)
[Deep Pop -- Lori Lakin's Blog](#)
[The Back Page -- Jason Page on ESPN Radio](#)
[Cine-Blog -- George Robinson's Blog](#)
[Documents On Art & Cinema - Daryl Chin's Blog](#)
[Brucie G's Wondrous Blog Of Adventure and Mystery -- Bruce Greenspan's Blog](#)

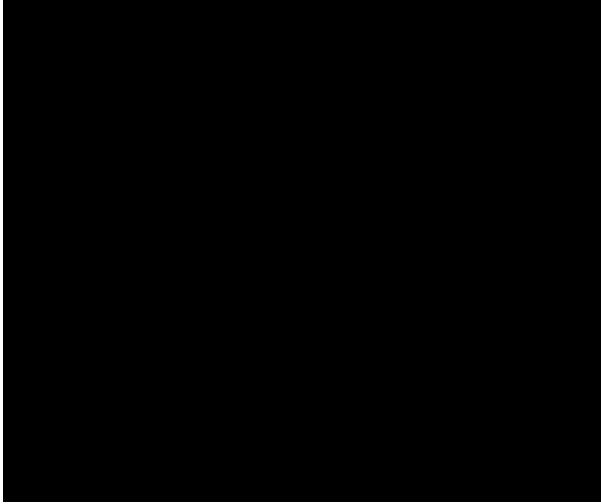
BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2019 (89)

▼ November (9)

[THEATER: "Pump Girl" Finds A Gusher At Irish Rep](#)

anything can be turned into anything else and the less likely, perhaps the more remarkable it will be if you get the alchemy right.



Apparently, people have been trying and trying with *Einstein's Dreams* ever since it was published. Per Wikipedia, this work has been adapted endlessly into plays and song cycles and dance pieces and here a musical, one that first debuted in 2005. As far as I know, none of them have worked. This version is no different. Joanne Sydney Lessner did the book and Joshua Rosenblum did the music and they both worked on the lyrics. Here, Time is personified into a dream-like lover for young Albert Einstein. He keeps dreaming of Time in all her fickle possibilities and she teases him on towards the revelation of the Theory that will make him immortal.

Little of this works, despite a game cast that struggles to sing the awkward songs the creative team crafted. However, the Prospect Theater Company has given this ineffective mess directed by Cara Reichel an exceptionally handsome production. Einstein's desk at the patent office sits on a round dais stage left. A staircase on stage right swoops up to a wide platform on the second level. Striking design work covers the stage floor with expected but effective details of time and the such. And a giant round clock face hangs above the stage, serving as a screen for countless projections, the vast majority of which are impressive and on point.

David Bengali did the excellent projection design and Sidney Shannon the period-friendly costumes. Kevin Heard dealt with the sound design that balances actors, singers and a fine six-piece orchestra led by music director and pianist Milton Granger, not to mention various subtle sound cues. And the ravishing scenic design is by Isabel Mengyuan Le. It's a pleasure to behold while you wait for the show to begin and something to study when the show quickly goes awry. I remember very little of the musical's feverish attempts to give the erudite and funny and odd musings of Lightman some sort of plot. But the set? I'd love to spend more time with it.

THEATER: "The Crucible" Is
Bedlam In Every Way

THEATER: "Einstein's Dreams"
Too Elusive For Real...

BOOKS: Is Finance The Root Of
All Evil?

THEATER: Good Intentions No
Substitute For Good Me...

THEATER: "Richard III," A
Schemer Undone By Greed,...

THEATER: "Enchanted April" --
The Charming Tale Th...

THEATER: To Delete or Not To
Delete, That Is The D...

MOVIES: "American Dharma"
Bum Steve Bannon

► [October](#) (21)

► [September](#) (10)

► [August](#) (9)

► [July](#) (7)

► [June](#) (3)

► [May](#) (6)

► [April](#) (10)

► [March](#) (5)

► [February](#) (1)

► [January](#) (8)

► [2018](#) (38)

► [2017](#) (6)

► [2016](#) (2)

► [2015](#) (22)

► [2014](#) (2)

► [2013](#) (5)

► [2012](#) (17)

► [2011](#) (15)

► [2010](#) (10)

► [2009](#) (43)

► [2008](#) (86)

► [2007](#) (781)

► [2006](#) (2412)

► [2005](#) (5)

THEATER OF 2019

Frankenstein: Under The Radar Fest at the Public ** 1/2
Minor Character: Under The Radar Festival at the Public ***
Ink: Under The Radar Festival at the Public ** 1/2
Choir Boy ** 1/2
White Noise ** 1/2
Kiss Me, Kate ***
Ain't No Mo' *** 1/2
Ain't Too Proud **
The Cradle Will Rock * 1/2
Mrs. Murray's Menagerie *** 1/2
Oklahoma! (on Broadway) ** 1/2
Socrates **
The Pain Of My Belligerence *
Burn This **
Hadestown *** 1/2
All My Sons * 1/2
Tootsie ** 1/2
Ink ***
Beetlejuice **
Estado Vegetal ***
Hans Christian Andersen * 1/2
Cirque du Soleil: Luzia ***
BLKS ** 1/2
Moulin Rouge ** 1/2
Bat Out Of Hell **
Unchilding **
Sea Wall/ A Life ** 1/2
Harry Potter and the Cursed Child ***
Betrayal *** 1/2
Fifty Million Frenchmen ** 1/2
Freestyle Love Supreme ** 1/2
Derren Brown: Secret ***
(A)loft Modulation * 1/2
The Great Society **
I Can't See *
Heroes Of The Fourth Turning ** 1/2
Chasing Rainbows: The Road To Oz ***
The Glass Menagerie (dir Austin Pendleton & Peter Bloch) **
Terra Firma (debut of The Coop theater company) **
Forbidden Broadway: The Next Generation ***
Dublin Carol ** 1/2
Soft Power **
The Decline and Fall of The Entire World As Seen Through The Eyes
Of Cole Porter ***
For Colored Girls ** 1/2
Scotland, PA **
The Sound Inside *** (great cast, clumsy ending)
User Not Found **
Enchanted April **

[DruidShakespeare: Richard III](#) * 1/2

[Broadbend, Arkansas](#) **

[Einstein's Dreams](#) * 1/2

[The Crucible](#) (by Bedlam)

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the creator of [BookFilter](#), a book lover's best friend. It's a website that lets you browse for books online the way you do in a physical bookstore, provides comprehensive info on new releases every week in every category and offers passionate personal recommendations every step of the way. He's also the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day with top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's available for free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his website. Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also available for free on iTunes.

POSTED BY [MICHAEL GILTZ](#) AT 11:58 PM 

NO COMMENTS:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)