



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 04, 2019

MICHAEL GILTZ AT WORK

THEATER: BOO! A Halloween Scare Fest Closes Its Eyes To The Real Terror

I CAN'T SEE * out of ****
NIGHTMARE NYC

Every year, New York City becomes haunted by scary pop-up sites of horror. One of the big players is Psycho Clan, the team behind Nightmare (which ran for 15 years) and other hits like This Is Real, not to mention immersive shows geared towards other holidays like Full Bunny Contact and Santastical. These are not your parents' haunted houses. And I've seen none of them or any of the shows by their competitors. Why? I'm a scaredy cat. Jump out from around a corner and yell "Boo!" and I guarantee I'll squeal and leap out of my shoes.

I am very, very easy to frighten. I think it began in first grade at St. Coleman's Catholic School. I sat in the front row of Sister Patricia's class, a very nice, even quiet nun who I shared a birthday with. She liked me, I was a good student and we got along. But I was also easily distracted and quite the talker. When I wasn't absorbed in some reading, I was chatting with the students around me. And when other students began talking and the noise in the room reached a fever pitch, Sister Patricia had a go-to tactic of snapping us back into silence. She took off her flat-heeled shoe and slammed it on a desk with a hard rap. BAM! BAM! BAM! That shut us up quick. And she didn't slam it on just any desk. She slammed it on my desk. And since I was always thoroughly absorbed in what I was reading or saying, it invariably caught me completely unawares. Kids in the back row would jump a little in their seats. Me? I hit the ceiling and my heart raced and it was a few minutes before I could catch my breath. Soon, I developed a nervous tic.

Ok, not really, but I am easy to scare. The new show *I Can't See* didn't scare me in the least.



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](#)

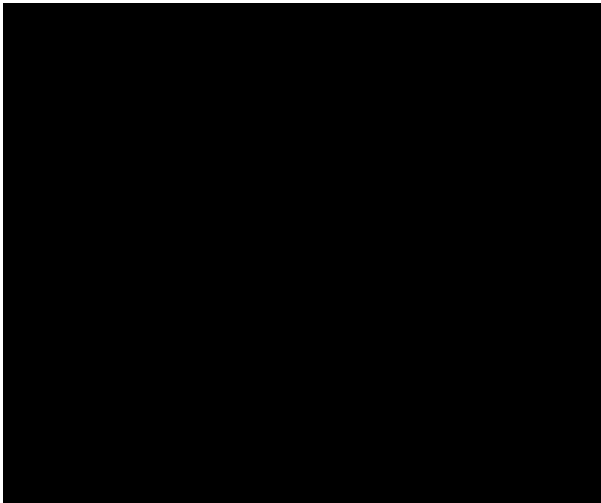
BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2019 (71)

▼ October (9)

THEATER: "Terra Firma" Is On Shaky Ground

It's a fine conceit. You experience this show completely in the dark! They blindfold you, slap headphones onto you and you experience an auditory experience while you stumble around following "umbilicals" from one area of the room to another. You take an Uber ride, stand at a bar, sit on the floor of a haunted mansion and all the while potential horrors are taking place all around you. Adding to the almost-full sensory experience are the sort of stunts pulled at fraternity and sorority hazings for generations. "Things" brush against you, cool breezes blow on you, water drips at you from a leak in ceiling and so on. In the show's best effect, someone throws up on you in that bar in a nicely warm queasy effect that of course is quickly brushed off and leaves no stains.



Unfortunately, none of the show is well thought out or hangs together. It begins in a vaguely medical setting, where people in white lab coats prepare you for your experience by blindfolding you and giving you a "pill" (a very tart SweetTart, I'd say) to help download the experience. You're encouraged to follow simple rules like "Don't die," which is always good advice.

But that doesn't quite gibe with the idea that you're going to be placed in a horror film setting -- in real life, you laugh at the people in the movie who make dumb choices. Here, now, you'll find out what a coward you really are. But that doesn't work since you're not the main character in the play and you never make a single choice.

And none of that set-up works easily with the very banal radio play taking place in the auditory portion of the evening. Ninety-nine percent of the experience is preparation, with you and friends meeting up, hanging out at a bar, planning to spend the night in a haunted house and then Ubering over to the site. None of it is scary or particularly interesting. If you want to scare people, a radio play where you hear the iPhone ding of an incoming text or wait while another character Venmo's money to a landlord isn't going to cut it.

THEATER: "The Glass Menagerie" Sans Tricks Or Trea...

THEATER: Wrestling With Faith in "Heroes Of The Fo...

THEATER: A Bright Future In Reach For "Chasing Rai...

THEATER: The Not-So "Great Society"

THEATER: BOO! A Halloween Scare Fest Closes Its Ey...

THEATER: "A(loft) Modulation" -- A Play With Jazz ...

THEATER: "Freestyle Love Supreme" and "Derren Brow...

BOOKS: A Fantasy Classic Finally Translated Into E...

► [September \(11\)](#)

► [August \(9\)](#)

► [July \(7\)](#)

► [June \(3\)](#)

► [May \(8\)](#)

► [April \(10\)](#)

► [March \(5\)](#)

► [February \(1\)](#)

► [January \(8\)](#)

► [2018 \(38\)](#)

► [2017 \(6\)](#)

► [2016 \(2\)](#)

► [2015 \(29\)](#)

► [2014 \(2\)](#)

► [2013 \(5\)](#)

► [2012 \(17\)](#)

► [2011 \(15\)](#)

► [2010 \(10\)](#)

► [2009 \(43\)](#)

► [2008 \(86\)](#)

► [2007 \(781\)](#)

► [2006 \(2412\)](#)

► [2005 \(5\)](#)

Literally none of this is scary, though it must be amusing for the behind-the-scenes team to guide audience members to stumble this way or that, gently sitting them down for one bit and then guiding them back up for the next. In the last few minutes of the show, you *finally* enter the haunted house and friends start to fall asleep (or disappear; it wasn't quite clear to me). It happens in such banal fashion that it's only later you realize this is the climactic horror of the evening, rather than just the prelude. Soon you're "blinded" by the flashlights of more lab-coated technicians and then bundled out into the night. About the only distinctive touch is their gender-neutral reference to all audience members as "Sam" since you'll be called "Sam" throughout the recorded adventure. Oh and both at the beginning and the end, a technician will casually say, "I love you." Well, I love you too.

I Can't See rightly says the scariest thing in the world is your imagination. Sadly, this work by Timothy Haskell and Paul Smithyman lacks it almost entirely.

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](#)

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 6:22 PM 

NO COMMENTS:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

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