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The Big Bang

by Jack Gardner
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K. Doug Miller and Gary Floyd in "The Big Bang"
(Source: Andy Hanson)

You'd have to be dead not to find something to laugh at in Theatre 3's production of **The Big Bang**: ninety minutes -- no intermission, mind you -- of non-stop hilarity and mayhem that will leave your eyes watering and your sides hurting.

The show is in Theatre 3's second space, Theater Too, downstairs from the main stage, a small, very intimate space that lends itself well to this type of show.

Dallas has seen several two-man (although this one is technically three) shows over the past few years such as "Greater Tuna" and "Nipples to the Wind." While I enjoyed these shows, I usually find

two people on stage playing multiple characters getting old after the first thirty minutes or so. Not so with "The Big Bang." Part of it is probably the frenetic pace of the script. From the moment the actors come on stage (serving crackers and Cheez Whiz™, so if you're hungry, sit in the front row) the pace is break-neck and remains that way through the entire ninety minutes.

The plot is fairly simple. As audience members, you are the invited guests and potential investors at a preview for a planned Broadway musical - the biggest Broadway musical in the history of the world. In fact, it IS the history of the world. Since, according to the characters, the show will run twelve hours over four nights, this version you will see is condensed. The location is the Park Avenue apartment of Dr. and Mrs. Sid Lipbalm, where the composers of the show happen to be house-sitting while the owners are away.

Theater 3's production is perfectly cast and Gary Floyd and K. Doug Miller have great chemistry together. Both performers sing very well, harmonizing with each other in character voices -- no mean feat. They're both very handsome as well. Pay close attention as well to Terry Dobson, who has a triple function as director, music director and onstage pianist, Albert. His reactions to the antics of Floyd and Miller are oftentimes as funny as what the boys themselves are doing.

One of the musical highlights is "Free Food & Frontal Nudity." It's a misleading title, although if you are in the right spot, the dance belts and fig leaves sported during this number may provide you a good view! Other standout numbers include "Diva," Floyd's portrayal of Queen Nefertiti a la Aretha Franklin, Miller's Attila the Hun singing "The Scourge of God" as Frank Sinatra, "Yesterday's Tomorrow" featuring the actors as first Josephine and Napoleon and then Michael Jackson and Cher, and Miller's solo "Loving Him" performed like Eva Braun doing Hildegard Kneff.

In all honesty, there are parts of "The Big Bang" that could be considered offensive by some. There are blatant stereotypes; racial, ethnic, sexual -- you name it. But NOTHING is sacred. This show is an equal opportunity offender and it's hysterical. Sacrilegious on the face of it, the Virgin Mary and Mrs. Ghandi singing the blues together over being the mothers of religious leaders comes across as a tour-de-force of tongue in cheek innuendo and cleverness. Gays, Indians, American Indians, Jews, Blacks, Whites, Southerners, Irishmen, Chinese, Japanese and everything in between - it's all fair game and fair because nobody is left out of the barrage.

The choreography by Amy Anders Corcoran is athletic and comical. Jac Adler's set design is not only functional and beautiful, but thankfully indestructible. Mark C. Guerra and Bruce R Coleman's costumes are innovative and nothing short of astounding. The challenges in this show required by the sheer scope of convertible costumes and usable scenery were expertly met by this team.

While the ticket prices are not cheap at \$25 to \$30 a seat, one leaves the theater with a smile on the face and the feeling that one might gladly have paid double for entertainment received. The seating is limited in this space and the run is short, so get your tickets while you can. You won't regret it.

Through September 7th at Theater Three. 2800 Rought Street, Suite 168, Dallas, Texas 75201. Tickets are \$25 to \$30 and may be purachsed at the box office (214-871-3300) or online at www.theater3dallas.com)

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