

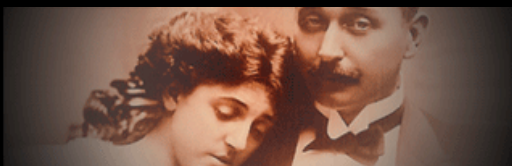
# DC THEATRE SCENE

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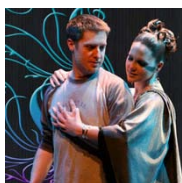
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## Magnum Opus

July 14, 2009 by Anna Brungardt  
Filed under Our Reviews

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Anna rates it: **5**



Love, jealousy, writer's block and all the madness and muses that fall in between elevate Michael Oberhauser's contemporary opera *Magnum Opus* to epic proportions.

Robert (Eric C. Black) is a playwright grappling with both his absent creativity and wife, Claire (Sarah Philippa), who is away on opera tours and the sole bread winner of the family. On a night of quiet desperation, after Claire and her platonic although overtly flirty friend John (Robert Legge) have returned, thick as thieves, from a tour, Robert finds himself visited by the demonic muses (Daniele Lorio and Tricia Lepofsky) who gifted the great Romantic composer Schumann (Eric Sillers) with both his talents and his madness. The opera, and yes, this is a fully mounted and produced, hour long opera, guides us through Robert's path from fame to his descent into madness. Perhaps most impressively, it achieves all this while remaining fully accessible, entertaining, and poignant.

Opera is a style which often falls under criticism for being inaccessible and irrelevant to a modern theater-goer's life. Director Jay Brock gives us a fresh take on this "antiquated" art, presenting a piece that is modern, in English (for which this plebeian is immensely grateful), and evocative. When Philippa mourns the loss of trust in her marriage, a beautiful sorrow that transcends the text finds its true home in Oberhauser's harrowing melodies and reaches the audience. Empathy is felt. The eyes well up. These are the emotionally loaded moments that are only achievable through opera, and fortunately for us, this production is full of them.

The entire cast of *Magnum Opus* is incredibly strong, each voice well-suited not only for its individual part, but for the complex harmonies that constantly and seamlessly flow throughout the show. If you wouldn't really say that opera is your thing, or if you've simply never given the mellifluous art form a try, this would be a perfect place to start.

*Magnum Opus* offers the average Fringer an accessible and moving foray into the dark, tragic, and often misunderstood world of opera.

Note: - I know Jay Brock and Sarah Philippa. It has not affected my review.

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Magnum Opus

Written by Michael Oberhauser

Directed by Jay Brock

Presented by Opera Alterna

Reviewed by Anna Brungardt

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vote BEST OF THE FEST July 26th

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- *crazy enough to be trying to make a living in theatre* (47.0%, 34 Votes)
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- loving your site (26.0%, 19 Votes)  

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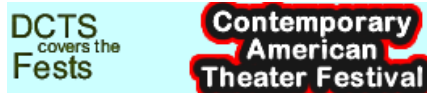
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- hating your site (1.0%, 1 Votes)  


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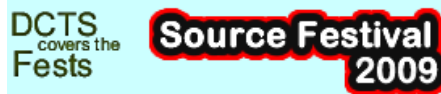
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- allartsreview4u
- American Theatre Magazine
- American Theatre Wing
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- Blue Gobo Videos
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« Jun

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In 2005, Ronnie Ruff founded DC Theatre Reviews, which became DC Theatre Scene.

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