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That May Well Be True

By Joel Hirschhorn, (Variety)

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Peter – Josh Weinstein Joy – Erin Quinn Purcell Russell – Daniel Milder

Jay Reiss' "That May Well Be True," making its world premiere at Hudson Mainstage, is an angry and penetrating exploration of friendship ruined by resentment and jealousy. Reiss has a knack for writing hostile confrontations and charging every scene with suspense. But the production is also clearly intended to be humorous, and the author's witty lines would be funnier if directed in a freer, less sober style.

Adversarial tension is sparked when novelist Peter (Josh Weinstein) fights a plagiarism lawsuit instituted by his old pal Russell (Daniel Milder), a former drug addict. Russell had wild experiences in Mexico that Peter utilized for a new bestseller, and he wants \$700,000 of the fee promised to Peter for his screenplay of the novel. When Peter shows up unexpectedly at Russell's Westchester apartment to hash out the problem, lifetime grievances are aired that aggravate their bitterness.

Prominent in the mix is Russell's roommate Joy (Erin Quinn Purcell), an economist who has been hired to counsel an Indian ashram on how to increase its profits. Russell amusingly defines their relationship as similar to a marriage ("We eat together, we bicker in front of friends, and we don't have sex").

Portraying Peter, Weinstein conveys the right blend of integrity and self-interest. Milder is a courageous, high-strung actor, and his Russell is a realistic portrait of self-destruction. What upsets the balance in the contest between the two is his exasperating, unlikable attitude: It's hard not to repudiate him even when his viewpoints are justified. An occasional inspired line ("If it wasn't for me, you'd still be listening to Phil Collins and defending it") softens him, but it's not enough to make us care about his fate.

The production is at its best during a scene between Peter and Joy. Director Greg Jackson carefully establishes a potentially romantic link between them, and their relationship is so winningly developed that the play falters after their connection is dropped. This portion also features the evening's most inventive bit, when Joy lists her albums of love songs by people who can't sing — Burt Reynolds, Tony Randall, Lorne Greene, Ed McMahon, Pele and William Shatner doing "Mr. Tambourine Man."

The final stages of combat between Peter and Russell consist of a vividly staged physical battle and criticisms flung in titular game "That May Well Be True." These accusations stir up frenzied emotion, although a hint that Russell and Joy may go from platonic to passionate is unconvincing. The climax, in general, would resolve more excitingly with a surprise twist. As it is, events trail off inconclusively,

That May Well Be True

suggesting that the author couldn't quite devise a proper ending.

Purcell's Joy is the evening's most notable element. The quietly commanding actress suggests a personality of depth and compassion. Joy is a character who can truly be called original, imaginative enough to indicate that Reiss, though a raw playwriting talent, has a solid theatrical future.

Sets, Ryan Wilson; costumes, Erin Quinn Purcell; lighting, Ryan Wilson; production stage manager, Jesse Russell Brooks. Running time: 1 HOUR, 40 MIN.

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A Stephen Solaka presentation of a play in one act by Jay Reiss. Directed by Greg Jackson.

Joel Hirschhorn is a Theater Review Contributor for Variety.com. You may reach him at jenandjoel@aol.com!

Can't Find Your One True Path?

By Angie Dixon

So you're trying to figure out what you're going to be when you grow up. The problem is you're 38, have two grown children and a husband, not to mention two cats and a dog named Sirius Black Dixon. Oh, wait, sorry, I guess I got distracted and thought we were talking about me.

Back to you. You're physically "grown," but you haven't found your "one true path." You don't know yet what you're going to do with your life, and you're feeling lost, confused, and worried.

Okay, let's start with the brutal truth here. If you have spent a lot of time, effort and creative energy looking for your one true path, I have bad news.

You probably don't have one.

You see, people who have one true paths know they do and they know what they are. This is not always true. Nothing is always true. But in general, people who "home in" on one career do it early and stick with it, or if they change careers, they do it in a reasoned, considered way.

People like us, who stumble and bumble and jumble from one thing to another to another to another, we don't have one true path. We have something. It's just not one true path.

That's the good news. Because what we have, boy is it better.

We have multiple paths. They fit our multiple passions and our multiple talents and our multitasking personalities.

You and I? We can be whatever we want. For as long as we want. And then go do something else. We can be writers, and while we're being writers, or when we're done being writers, we can be teachers, or driving instructors. Now, admittedly, we're not going to be astrophysicists or CEOs of major companies. But most of us don't want that. What we can be is just about anything we want to be - and just about

everything.

Don't you feel liberated?

Angie Dixon is a writer and webmaster of The Leonardo Trait. Sign up for a free teleseminar at www.natural-aging.com and while you're there, get a free report on failing successfully.



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