



THE GOD WHO WASN'T THERE

"Irreverently lays out the case that Jesus Christ never existed." -Newsweek



www.TheGodMovie.com

Feedback - Ads by Google

- HOME POLITICS MEDIA BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT LIVING STYLE GREEN WORLD CHICAGO
COMEDY 23/6 VIDEO BLOGGER INDEX ARCHIVE Twitter: Follow Us Get Email Alerts Make HuffPost Your HomePage



Michael Giltz

Posted November 19, 2008 | 07:44 PM (EST)

- BIO Get Email Alerts Bloggers' Index
Become a Fan

Theater/Music: Sleepwalking, Seafaring and Scaggs



Read More: Boz Scaggs, Catalpa, Donal o'Kelly, Jazz Standards, Mike Birbiglia, Sleepwalking, Entertainment News



Buzz up! Be the First to Submit This Story to Digg
Get Breaking News Alerts never spam
Share Print Comments

A rundown of two one-person shows and the current Boz Scaggs tour.

SLEEPWALK WITH ME -- Mike Birbiglia is a comic whose new solo show -- Sleepwalk With Me -- is currently playing in downtown New York City at the Bleecker Street Theatre. It falls somewhere between the pure monologues of Spalding Gray and the brilliant, idiosyncratic but clearly stand-up of Eddie Izzard. Birbiglia spins stories of his battles with sleepwalking, which range in intensity from vivid dreams in which a

hyena-like creature hovers above him about to strike all the way to jumping out a second story window in a hotel because he believed a missile was about to strike. But the deeper tale is about his nascent career, failed relationships (with some very understanding girlfriends, it must be said) and a welcome late in life understanding of Birbiglia's father. Is it more than stand-up? Less than a play? Who cares? Shows like this are far more common in the UK, where stand-up is more vibrant and people with solid success start playing small theaters for limited runs. Not all of them shape an evening with quite the skill that Birbiglia brings to his modest story. But if it's funny, it's funny and no one worries too much about what to call it. Birbiglia is funny. I'm not necessarily clamoring to hear what he'll come up with next, but I am intrigued enough to keep him in mind. Anyone who can wring laughs out of the low-key repetition of the phrase "I know" has a gift for aligning an audience with his own slanted view of things. Too bad, however, that he didn't don pajamas for the performance, as in the poster for the show. For a guy who readily embraces an unflattering description of himself, Birbiglia sure looks sweet in his jammies. Just make certain he's wrapped up tight in his sleeping bag before you doze off: you do not want a loose Birbiglia in the house.

The New York Times' Neil Genzlinger said: "Mike Birbiglia's pacing is simply perfect in "Sleepwalk With Me," his funny, appealing one-man show."

Variety's Sam Thielman said: "Birbiglia's delivery is terrific -- his not-that-bright everyman routine

Popular Stories on HuffPost

- Fashion Face-Off! Michelle Obama And Carla Bruni-Sarkozy Finally Meet In France (VIDEO, PHOTOS, POLL) *Video, poll and slideshow
Levi Johnston Talks Safe Sex With Tyra Banks (VIDEO) ***UPDATE*** 8:30pm: People.com is reporting that Sarah Palin has issued...
Oscar de la Renta Slams Michelle Obama's Buckingham Outfit As Major Designers Feel Ignored While Michelle Obama has made lesser...
Verena von Pletten 7 Lessons To Be Learned From Carla Bruni So here's the thing. There's no shortage of articles dedicated to that certain je ne...
Huff TV Arianna Discusses Michelle Obama's "Fantastic" Style On CBS'

should strike a chord with anyone who's ever tripped for no reason or gotten someone's gender wrong. But his writing is deceptively clever, keeping salient points at the forefront as the show moves forward. This technique doesn't always work to Birbiglia's advantage: "Sleepwalk With Me" ends too abruptly, and some of the jokes are less interesting than the story at its center. But with so much to recommend the show, these reservations feel stingy."

The New York Post's Frank Scheck gave it three out of four stars and said: "At times, the stand-up roots show through too blatantly. But under Seth Barrish's capable direction, Birbiglia manages to pull the thematic elements together by, among other things, framing the evening with stories about his relationship with his emotionally reserved father."

The AP's Peter Santilli said: "During the 90-minute performance, it gradually becomes clear "Sleepwalk With Me" is something greater than simply good standup comedy. Birbiglia displays an uncanny ability to be hilarious, terrifying and poignant -- all in the same breath."

Theatermania's David Finkle said: "As he digresses to talk about turning off cell phones, his slow sexual development, his cautious father and gregarious mother, his hypochondria, an actual cancerous tumor in the bladder caught in time and other subjects that could be called ephemeral, he recalls Woody Allen's nebbishy persona, Steven Wright's cerebral musings, and even the manner in which Sam Levenson giggled at his own jokes."

CATALPA -- Another one-man show, *Catalpa* tells the daring, **true story of the rescue of six Irish prisoners in 1875** ([here's a NYTimes article from the period](#)) from under the nose of the British by a crew that sailed from New Bedford, Massachusetts to a penal colony in Australia. Actor **Donal O'Kelly** holds the **Irish Arts Center** stage easily, just like he reportedly did some 20 years ago when he first appeared in New York at the same location. O'Kelly jokes that's less of a career arc and more of a horizontal line, but there's something inspiring about a talented actor simply doing the work. The work in question is unnecessarily framed -- very briefly -- as a movie pitch. O'Kelly implies Hollywood executives proved uninterested in this thrilling story and he gets his revenge by acting out the script, occasionally tossing in ideas (like which movie star could play the female lead) but mostly giving himself the easy, uninteresting option of using film script language ("a wide shot that moves in swiftly on a ship that..." is sort of typical). While this lets O'Kelly indulge in some broad brushstrokes quite effectively for some characters, it mostly just keeps the story at an emotional distance. It also contrasts sharply with his playful use of word and sound he delights in; the richest moments are when O'Kelly makes a song out of someone's name or repeats a syllable over and over until you can almost see the roiling waves of the ocean. Frankly, I'd rather hear the show stripped of its movie script conventions and recorded as a radio play. Maybe the Hollywood suits were right after all.

Variety's Sam Thielman said: "All in all, it's an improbably beautiful show, especially considering O'Kelly has only a white sheet hanging from a pipe and Ronan Fingleton's lights to paint a picture. The really gorgeous visuals of "Catalpa" take place in our heads, with the singing, declaiming, gesticulating O'Kelly the touchstone."

Theatermania's Patrick Lee said: "Donal O'Kelly seems to rejoice in the musicality of spoken words and in their capacity to paint visual pictures. This infectious love of language fills the two-hour show with precisely chosen words that paint visual pictures for the audience. Unfortunately O'Kelly has far more success rendering these little pictures than with painting the big one: the story gets away from him."

BOZ SCAGGS AT THE BLUE NOTE -- Somebody mentioned famous singers who have tackled standards, listing Rod Stewart and **Boz Scaggs** together, which is enough to depress any serious vocalist. Though pop singers can become accomplished in tackling the American Songbook, few have done it with such immediate grace and insight as Scaggs, who first delivered an album of standards five years ago with the impeccable *But Beautiful*. **His new Decca release *Speak Low*** is just as sublime, this time adding more ambitious arrangements to the quiet intimacy it's no surprise he gravitated to. Scaggs came to the Blue Note recently, one of the few remaining tiny clubs in New York where you can see a show with a serious audience that pays attention. Despite transcendent versions of classics like "Harbor Lights," my only quibble is that I would have preferred a set much longer and solely devoted to the classics (as opposed to *his* classics). When Scaggs duetted with the stylish, beautifully restrained backup singer Mone't or played lightly with

"Washington Unplugged"

Arianna was on CBS' "Washington..."

Alex Leo The "Real Housewives Of New York City" Flowchart Of Hate

I'm a little embarrassed to love this show as much as...

"BRUNO" TRAILER! Calamity, African Babies, Chase Scenes And More (NSFW VIDEO)

IT'S HERE! The trailer for this July's Sacha Baron Cohen...

NATO Leaders Focus On Afghanistan, But Most Reject Obama's Plea For Troops (SLIDESHOW)

STRASBOURG, France — On the eve of the NATO...

First Lady Fashion At Friday's NATO Concert (PHOTOS)

Another night, another fashion opportunity for NATO leaders and their spouses! See...

Diana Palin, Sarah Palin's Sister-In-Law, Arrested For Breaking Into Home

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Police say Alaska Gov....

John Oliver Explains The Real Reason You Never Touch The Queen (VIDEO)

John Oliver was upset enough to drop his monocle when he...

Obama Teases Reporter From India During Press Conference (VIDEO)

Obama held a conference packed with press from around the world on Thursday. He called...

Jim Cramer Declares The Depression "Over" (VIDEO)

On Thursday's episode of "Mad Money" host Jim Cramer declared that the depression...

Scientists Find Rocket Fuel Chemical In Infant Formula

ATLANTA — Traces of a chemical used in rocket fuel were found in samples of...

Least Wasteful Cities In America (SLIDESHOW)

It's great to love the city you live in, and better to

"This Time, The Dream's On Me," it was thrilling to hear an artist steeped in r&b discover a talent for a subtly different sort of vocalizing. By all means, see him live and buy his new album, one of the best of the year.

The New York Times' Stephen Holden said: "Mr. Scaggs's most successful music has shrewdly contrasted the rough and the smooth, the voice careering unsteadily over polished grooves like a rogue on a bender. By removing the cushions supporting Mr. Scaggs's unruly singing, Mr. Goldstein's deglamorized arrangements exposed his vocal quirks: a continually wavering sense of pitch, jarring shifts in timbre from moment to moment and unsteady phrasing."

Variety said: "Scaggs was ably abetted by the tasteful reedmen Bob Sheppard and Paul McCandless, each of whom moved fluidly between instruments, most notably on a subtly abstracted version of "Save Your Love for Me." Thanks to their collective light touch -- as well as the singer's own easy mien -- a vibrant buoyancy permeated just about every groove of a breezy set that positively flew by."

More in Entertainment...

Reality Star Jade Goody Buried In Lavish...
 Robert De Niro Nanny Sues For \$40,000
 Demi Moore's Twitter-Based Suicide Intervention
 Anti-Chris Brown Song Hits Radios

digg™ HuffPost Stories Surging Right Now

[Michelle Obama's Clothing Has Sean Hannity All Out Of Sorts](#)

[RICHARD POPLAWSKI, Pittsburgh Gunman, Kills 3 Police Officers](#)

[Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld: Does Iran Harbor Osama bin Laden?](#)

[John Demjanjuk, Ohio Man Accused Of Being Nazi Guard, Avoids Deportation](#)

Sponsored Links

[The Most \\$100K+ Jobs](#)

Search 72,384 Jobs that pay over \$100,000 at TheLadders.com. [www.TheLadders.com](#)

["My Teeth Are so White"](#)

Read the trick, discovered by a mom, to turn yellow teeth white. [CathysTeeth.com](#)

[Arthritis Information](#)

Sign Up to Receive a Free Info Kit About Rheumatoid Arthritis. [www.RAStraightTalk.com](#)

[Buy a link here](#)

Comments 2 Pending Comments 0
 FAQ: Comments & Moderation FAQ: HuffPost Accounts

Want to reply to a comment? Hint: Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to

View Comments: [Newest](#) [Expand](#)
[First](#) [All](#)

[3fingerbrown](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of 3fingerbrown](#) [permalink](#)

Another nice piece, Michael. And as long as the subject is solo shows, allow me to plug another worthy

love it for a reason like being green!
FastCompany...

HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES

Women's Rights Michelle Obama Europe
 Newspapers Cars War Wire
 Video Financial Crisis Barack Obama

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES](#)

Books by this author

This Blogger's Books from [amazon.com](#)

A cabin of one's own: New England's MacDowell Colony celebrates 100 years of artistic utopia. And the gay and lesbian artists who prospered there celebrate ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

Affairs to remember: Farley Granger bedded Ava Gardner, Shelley Winters, and Leonard Bernstein. In his autobiography, Include Me Out, Hitchcock's muse ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

entry: Mike Daisey's new monologue "If You See Something, Say Something." Amazing that someone can make such an entertaining evening out of the Dept. of Homeland Security!

<http://www.mikedaisey.com/monologues.sht>

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 08:06 AM on 11/20/2008

Michael Giltz - Huffpost Blogger I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz [permalink](#)



Thanks for the tip. I read the good reviews and hope to check that show out as well.

[See Michael Giltz's Profile](#)

♥ Favorite ⚙ Flag as abusive Posted 04:18 PM on 11/21/2008

Comments are closed for this entry

You must be [logged in](#) to reply to this comment. [Log in](#) or

Ads by Google

Free Internet Explorer 8
Download the New, Optimized Version of Internet Explorer for Free Now!
[IE8.MSN.com](#)

2009 SPEAKER SERIES - LIVE & UNSCENSORED
THE MINDS THAT MOVE THE WORLD

Chicago Theatre
PURCHASE 4 TICKETS GET \$10 OFF EACH, USE CODE: SPIN

Google™ Custom Search