

# Making Sense Out of Insanity

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The Sitting Duck  
February 7, 2008

"Six Women with Brain Death or Expiring Minds Want to Know" is an off-color, screwed-up mind melt. Everyday life is interrupted by conversations with a severed head and foul-mouthed Disney critters, religion-affirming alien encounters and a confrontation with a soap opera star who crawls out of a television set.

Somehow it all sort of makes sense.



But if you don't get Capital Playhouse's latest show, don't fret. Just enjoy this rascally revue for its zany, mildly R-rated humor, snappy songs and excellent cast of local ladies.

From the opening scene where six women enter a stage bathed in eerie red and blue lights and ask, "Does it ever cross your mind that things are a little bit out of whack?", you know you've entered a realm where logic holds no authority.

"Do you think you understand this song? If you do, then you're sick – and wrong, wrong, wrong," they sing.

The show glues together a series of sketches along the lines of a variety show that spoof high school reunions, game shows, daytime soaps and Barbie and Ken. The stories poke fun at relationships, motherhood, Republican politics, religion and pop culture while

constantly reminding us that we live in a world where tabloids sell. Headlines announce “Bizarre Disease Makes Woman Eat Kitchen Sink!” and “Baby Born Holding IUD!” and people buy that crap.

Although the music and lyrics were written by a man, Mark Houston, women may have the upper-hand when it comes to understanding the jokes. Anyone, however, can relish the songs that cover the spectrum of sounds from jazz to Latin, Motown to country and early ‘80s.

There are no big glitzy razzle-dazzle dance numbers, but what’s there works just fine. Comedic timing is far more important for a show like this and the gals bring it on.

All six actresses are talented but Heidi Fredericks and Kim Holm shine brightest because of their versatility and campy facial expressions, especially in their two duets. In one scene, Holm is sitting at her kitchen table with her hair in gargantuan rollers when the petite Fredericks climbs out of the TV wearing a boa and taunts that she knows plot secrets. In another, Fredericks is a just a vain, whiny head on a cake platter, being carted around by her Southern-fried friend, Holm.

The rest of the cast includes Melissa Backstrom, Karen Christensen, Stacie Hart and Stephanie Nace.

Costume designer Tom Hudson dresses each damsel in a different style: frumpy plaid, business, casual khakis, hippy skirt, denim and black lipstick, etc. They look like women you know; or maybe yourself. The basic costumes are augmented with faux Afros, animal ears, frilly aprons, and glowing fiber-optic antennae specific to each scene.

Peter Kappler, who has performed on all of Olympia’s stages and directed last year’s "I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change!" at Capital Playhouse, is back in the director’s chair. Looks like a good spot for him.