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Rapid change, escapism the themes of Motion Sickness

MOTION SICKNESS

Beau Jest Moving Theater.
Dec. 31, Suffolk University.

By SIMSON L. GARFINKEL

A PLAY WITH THE UNLIKELY NAME of *Motion Sickness* stole my heart on First Night. Steven Henson, who plays both narrator and a variety of characters, explains that motion sickness is what happens to people who undergo rapid, unpredictable, tumultuous movement. The only way to avoid it is to stay where you are.

But some people's lives are intolerable; they cannot remain in one place. *Motion Sickness* follows the travels of five exceptional characters representative of the passions within each of us. Henson's character is a sage, an amateur poet of sorts, who talks of sharing boxcars with Faulkner and watching sunsets with Einstein. He keeps moving because if he didn't, he wouldn't get anywhere.

Motion Sickness comprises five independent story lines, each centered upon one member of the company. The stories are our own: a fed-up Lisa Tucker plays a woman who is tired of the daily headaches of living in the city; late for work, she hires a taxi and has it drive her to Vermont.

Elyse Garfinkle's voyage is more into the realm of danger than distance. She plays a little girl who cajoles her father into taking her to the beach. He forbids her to swim in the ocean, but she does anyway, and swims away from the shore until she can't find her way back.

Then there are those who plan their escapes. When Bob (David Robenson) and Ann (Karen Tarjan) end their relationship at the beginning of the play, Bob takes a vacation to an exotic European village where nobody speaks English; Ann sells all of her possessions and moves into an empty apartment, reveling in the simplicity of her new existence.



The travels are interesting by them- rected that the audience has no trouble



Elyse Garfinkle takes flight in *Motion Sickness*.



The travels are interesting by themselves, but motion sickness, as Henson narrates, is an inevitable consequence of violent movement. Soon each voyager is in over his or her head; precise acting and tack-sharp choreography force the audience to empathize with the characters' plights. A combination of comedy and suspense rivets attention to the stage.

The play has few props. Instead, the actors use one another to set the stage and scene, playing everything from townspeople to fish to airplane windows. Best is when Garfinkle's head pops out of a suitcase that David Robenson is carrying; she plays his conscience. The characters are all so distinct, and the force of the play so di-

rected, that the audience has no trouble keeping everything separate. Good music, dancing, and lyrics drive the performance forward as the characters search for a simple, carefree existence.

"I don't know if I'm going to live, but I know I'm going to land!" says Henson after he jumps from an airplane and his parachute fails to open. Humor and movement are the main ingredients of this production, which was written by the company in collaboration with writer James Taylor. Each player marvelously exploits her or his talents for mime, dance, and song.

Motion Sickness will be shown next at the Majestic Theater on March 22-23.

On The Town

Compiled by Peter Dunn

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

The Hooters perform at the Paradise, 967 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston. Telephone: 254-2052.

Galaxy 500 and Blake Babies perform at 9 pm at Nightstage, 823 Main Street, Cambridge, just north of MIT. Tickets: \$6. Telephone: 497-8200.

Perfect World, The World of Form, and Scuff perform at 7:30 at Necco Place, One Necco Place, near South Station in downtown Boston. Tickets: \$3.50. Telephone: 426-7744.

THEATER

Spitting Into the Wind, Laura Browder's play confronting the explosive issues of "Red-baiting" and government-sanctioned censorship, opens today at the New Ehrlich Theatre, 539 Tremont Street, Boston. Continues through February 4 with performances Thursday-Saturday at 8 pm and Sunday at 2 pm. Tickets: \$15 general, \$10 seniors and children. Telephone: 482-6316.

FILM & VIDEO

The Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation continues its *Best of the Coolidge* film series with *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) at 5:30 & 9:20 and *Dr. Strangelove* (Stanley Kubrick, 1964) at 7:40 at 290 Harvard Street, Coolidge Corner, Brookline. Also presented Thursday, January 18. Tel: 734-2500.

*** CRITICS' CHOICE ***

The Brattle Theatre continues its Wednesday/Thursday *Janus Film Festival* series with *Pandora's Box* (G. W. Pabst, 1928) at 4 pm & 8 pm and *M* (Fritz Lang, 1930) at 6 pm & 10 pm at 40 Brattle Street, Harvard Square, Cambridge. Admission: \$5 general, \$3 seniors and children (good for the

Ongoing Theater

*** CRITICS' CHOICE ***

The Bald Soprano, Eugene Ionesco's absurdly comic stab at middle-class banality, and **The Chairs**, Ionesco's tragicomic parody of a 75-year-old marriage, continues through January 13 as a presentation of the American Repertory Theatre at the Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Performances are Tuesday-Saturday at 8 pm, Sunday at 7 pm, and Saturday/Sunday matinées at 2 pm. Tickets: \$16 to \$33. Telephone: 495-2668.

The Devil Amongst Us, an audience-participation murder mystery, continues indefinitely at the Mystery Café, 738 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge. Performances are Thursday-Saturday at 7:30. Tickets: \$25 to \$28 (includes meal). Telephone: 262-1826.

Forbidden Broadway 1989, the latest updated version of Gerard Alessandrini's musical comedy revue, continues indefinitely at the Terrace Room, Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Performances are Tuesday-Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 7 pm & 10 pm, and Sunday at 3 pm & 6 pm. Tickets: \$16.50 to \$24.50 depending on performance. Telephone: 357-8384.

Hollywood After Dark, a nightclub revue celebrating the glory days of "the Silver Screen musical," continues indefinitely at the Charles Playhouse, 74 Warrenton Street, Boston. Performances are Sunday at 7:30, Monday at 8:00, and Wednesday & Saturday at 2:00. Tickets: \$14 to \$16. Telephone: 426-6912.

Morning's At Seven, Paul Osborn's gen-

Nonsense, Dan Goggin's comedy about the Little Sisters of Hoboken who stage a talent show to raise money to bury four of their number, continues indefinitely at the Charles Playhouse, 74 Warrenton Street, Boston. Performances are Tuesday-Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 6 pm & 9 pm, with matinées Thursday at 2 pm and Sunday at 3 pm. Tickets: \$15.50 to \$26.50 general, half-price for seniors and students on Thursday matinee. Telephone: 426-6912.

O Pioneers!, Darrah Cloud's adaption of the Willa Cather 1913 novel of struggle and sacrifice on the American frontier, continues through February 4 as a presentation of the Huntington Theatre Company at the Boston University Theatre, 264 Huntington Avenue, Boston. Performances are Tuesday-Saturday at 8 pm with matinées Wednesday, Saturday, & Sunday at 2 pm. Tickets: \$14 to \$29. Telephone: 266-3913.

Out Bran and Remembrance, Boston Baked Theatre's latest collection of musical and satiric sketches, continues indefinitely at the Boston Baked Theatre, 255 Elm Street, Davis Square, Somerville, near the Davis Square T-stop on the red line. Performances are Friday at 8:15 and Saturday at 7:00 & 9:15. Tickets: \$13.50 and \$15. Telephone: 628-9575.

Otherwise Engaged, Simon Gray's comedy of sex, society, and yuppies, continues through February 4 at the Lyric Stage Theatre, 54 Charles Street, Boston. Performances are Wednesday-Friday at 8:00, Saturday at 5:00 & 8:30, and Sunday at 3:00. Tickets: \$13.50 to \$17. Telephone: 742-8703.

Party of One, Morris Bobrow's new musical revue about the perils of comingling, continues indefinitely at the Theatre Lobby at Hanover Street, 216 Hanover Street, Boston. Performances are Tuesday-Friday at 8:00, Saturday at 7:00 & 9:30, and Sunday at 3:00 & 7:00. Tickets: \$14.50 to \$21.50. Telephone: 227-9381.

The Promises, Aleksei Arbutov's fascinat-

Talking With . . ., Jane Martin's play of 11 women as they reveal their anxieties, accomplishments, and dreams, continues through January 28 at The Back Alley Theatre, 1253 Cambridge Street, Inman Square, Cambridge. Performances are Thursday-Sunday at 8 pm. Tickets: \$12. Telephone: 491-8166.

Twelfth Night, by William Shakespeare, continues through January 20 as a presentation of the American Repertory Theatre at the Loeb Drama Center, 64 Brattle Street, Cambridge. Performances are Tuesday-Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 2 pm & 8 pm, and Sunday at 2 pm & 7 pm. Tickets: \$16 to \$33. Telephone: 547-8300.

Under a Mantle of Stars, Manuel Puig's black comedy about an aging pair of visitors and their adopted daughter, continues through January 27 as a presentation of the Cicatrix Theatre Company at the Leland Center, Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street, Boston. Performances are Thursday-Saturday at 8 pm. Tickets: \$8. Telephone: 282-8348.

