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## audience reviews

### *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Big Idea Theatre

**Review:** My wife and I saw this show on its second night, Saturday, April 11, and were very impressed! A long play, and very dense in dialog and theme, the actors playing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (Jeffrey Lloyd Heatherly and Kristine David) did an excellent job, managing both the rapid exchanges and long pauses with focus and intensity. Kelly Ogden as the Player was wonderful in the deliberate overacting that the character requires, as well as the more finely nuanced moments. Also of note was Benjamin T. Ismail as Hamlet, in a fun and nutty performance. The rest of the cast, who doubled in the roles of the major parts in Hamlet as well as the troupe of tragedians, did a commendable job, and the final speech by Carissa Meagher worked beautifully. I've been a fan of this script for several decades, and was disappointed in the movie version, and I believe that director Kirk Blackinton and his cast have put together a well paced, intelligent, and superior production of this great play. If you've not been to the Big Idea Theatre, it is a small space with intimate seating, so the acting can be much more focused than in a larger space that requires larger-than-life acting. This show was well worth seeing, and this is the place to see it!

**Review:** This was an excellent production, one from the perspective of two of Hamlet's doomed school friends. Kristine David was fantastic, carrying the show with an incredible ability to make the density of the script accessible and understandable, all the while being completely natural and real. sJeff Heatherly was the perfect complement as Rosencrantz, or was he Guildenstern? Jeff commanded the stage physically, both when bellowing his confusion to the mysterious world of Elsinore and when sitting helplessly by, waiting, waiting for someone to tell him why he was there in the first place. Kelly Ogden was mischevious and a little saucy as the Player Pimp, or was she the Player Queen? She and her band of roving actors were a welcome comedic addition to the existential angst that R & G found themselves in. And then there was Hamlet himself, Ben Ismail, doing the best version of 'the crab' in any production of Hamlet ever done. His Hamlet's 'madness' is 'not to be' missed. The direction by Kirk Blackinton was perfect, making sure that the humor was as evident as the drama and staging a heartbreaking ending. For lovers of Shakespeare, there are plenty of inside jokes. For lovers of theatre, you will do yourself a favor by seeing this flawless production.

- SED

**Review:** Fantastic show. I expected to laugh, but didn't expect to be effected emotionally! Well done!

**Review:** It was spectacular..... I am not a theater goer but I really enjoyed the people and their performances. Especially when the actress in the big red coat pretended to die and she was literally at my feet. I was surprised and backed up in my chair. I will definitely be attending more. The lead actress (Rosencrantz or Guiderenstern) was my favorite and I was totally mesmerized by her.

**Review:** This play takes a special existential look at a couple of characters in the Bard's most famous play. The pair never really leave the stage, as Shakespeare's Hamlet weaves in and out through their world. The dialogue moves smartly between introspective acknowledgement of one's fate in this world...to comedic slapstick. The main characters in Hamlet become the supporting cast, as these two minor characters take center stage. The dynamic between these two seemingly confused individuals, is intriguing to say the least. My wife and I found this performance to be very entertaining. The leads were great...as were the supporting cast...you have to decide which is which. Go see this show while you still can!  
- JD

**Review:** I love this show and this was the best production of it that I have ever seen. Ommunity theater takes on a whole new meaning - all the actors were fantastic, the space is comfortable, the direction was impeccable : I was wholly entertained and will definitely be back!

**Review:** Wow. Seriously - wow. Without question one of the best show's I have ever seen, and I have seen a LOT of theater. The acting - Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in particular - was top-notch. Go see this show!

**Review:** What a wonderful story with a brilliant cast! Go see it NOW! You can't lose.

**Review:** This show is simply AMAZING! The energy, focus, articulation and FANTASTIC comedic timing of all involved is BRILLIANT! Everyone was wonderful but special kudos need to be set out for Kristine David, as one of the leads, who manages Stoppard's language flawlessly and brings a tremendous sense of insight and realism to her character. Also Kelly Ogden, as the Player, was always delivering her lines with an impish wink and a smile that let the audience know there is so much more to the "story". A final kudos to Benjamin Ismail, the most intriguing Hamlet I have ever scene, and one which I shall always remember...his physicality was amazing! DO NOT MISS THIS SHOW!!! -SSS

**Review:** I thoroughly enjoyed the entire production. Kristine David and Jeffrey Lloyd Heatherly had wonderful chemistry and Kelley Ogden certainly fit the part of the Player King. The rest of the cast, especially Benjamin Ismail in the role of Hamlet, was excellent. I would love to see him play in a standard Hamlet. I especially appreciated the imaginative usage of such a simple set. I haven't laughed so much in a very long time.

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