

theater

Review for Noah's Arkansas

By Brandie Fitzgerald

Noah's Arkansas opens into what feels like just another day for a typical couple. Like the blue fly swatter and wildlife calendar placed to create just this impression, the characters at first glance feel ordinary. The beauty of Jerrod Bogard's new play is how this perception transforms into something else entirely.

Lizzy and Wayne Riggins are familiar in their complaints, struggles, and various coping methods. Played pitch perfectly by Kristin Skye Hoffmann and Justin Ness, these characters irritate and amuse until embedded firmly under the skin. Enter into this Wayne's teenage son Michael, an emo kid with actual problems. Mike Komala does an excellent job of conveying teenage restlessness and vulnerability. Wayne's father, Lester lives nearby and figures into the mix as a sly and perceptive old man with some issues of his own. In the final act, Erik Frandsen home the entire play in a lyrical back and forth between events past and present both real and imagined.



The set design done by Joshua David Bishop is evocative of a dreamscape and totally appropriate to the contemporary tone of the play. Like *Noah's Arkansas* itself, the set conveys both the here and now and the intangible abstract. Judy Merrick and Bennett W. Harrell are the good cop/ bad cop duo that provide at turns comic relief and perspective to the family drama playing out.

Noah's Arkansas begins in a familiar place and gradually unfolds to less comfortable common ground in a way that is deeply insightful. The entire cast works together seamlessly to immerse you in the story. This along with the thoughtful set design and excellent dialog make *Noah's Arkansas* an experience worth having.

<http://www.wideeyedproductions.com/April.html>