



Last night found **Pawn** and escort at the premier performance of **Youngblood Theatre's** inaugural season: *David's Redhaired Death*. The script, by Sherry Kramer, is a train wreck. It is full of forward references, flashbacks, speeches to the audience, and other atypical theatrical conceits. The story has barely any narrative to it, but rather we in the audience are given stuttering glimpses into another train wreck; the love affair between two redheads, Jean (Tess Cinpinski) and Marilyn (Jazmin Vollmar).

Action begins at an open mic night. Jean takes the stage and begins the first of many speeches to the audience. A Next comes a rather twee bit about the sisterhood of red haired women and their supposedly extraordinary qualities. A This provides a thread which weaves in and out of a budding relationship between Jean and Marilyn, her paramour. *David's Redhaired Death* is a production starved for silences, nowhere more than in this first third of the one-act. A Jean and Marilyn hurtle forward (and sometimes back) propelled by the fever pitch of their dialog and monologues. A You may find yourself dazzled by the rapid fire dialog, **Pawn** found himself numbed.

The best parts of a drama are often found in those spaces between and around the words. A We are given no such room here, neither are the actors. A They seem at times to strain against the sheer volume of text through which they must chew in any given scene. A But just as the audience is given little or no time to reflect upon the text, the characters at times seem to lack reflection as sentence after sentence spring forth from them and fall, unconsidered, onto the stage floor.

The final third of the show does bring us a moment or two of pause, as well as one truly moving scene between Jean and Marilyn. A Cinpinski and Vollmar shine in this part of the show, and the spare setting melts away from our vision as the intensity of the acting increases. A Jean's exit speech in the penultimate scene was quite nearly profound. A Had she been allowed to slump down into one of the empty seats, taken a moment and found her motivation for continuing after the psychic body-blows she has just taken (and dealt out) this whole scene could have gone a long way towards reclaiming an otherwise problematic effort. One hopes Youngblood continue their work, but that they consider more carefully which shows to produce and how frantically they stage them. A This production A disappoints; a defter hand could have tamed this unruly script and presented us the heart hammering story buried within it, without hammering our heads in the process. A This kind of herky-jerky forwards/backwards, repetitious, staccato, reflexive script can be rendered into a moving theatrical experience, as **Pawn** found with **Simple 8's** production of *Monsters* at **Arcola Theatre** back in May, but not like this.

In retrospect, given some more time to consider both the script and the performance, I have tamed some of my earlier comments. A I do look forward to seeing the rest of **Youngblood's** season. A If nothing else I am impressed by the sheer audacity of their repertory effort. A Also, the more I think about it, and despite its complexity, I really did like the script for DRD. A The problems in the production made that hard to appreciate at first blush.