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Culture Briefs

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By

Kind of blue

I urge you to walk up the narrow staircase to MainLine Theatre, waltz into the low-key, homey sitting area, and order a hot beverage – just so you can drink out of a quaint ceramic cup. The intimate setting will make you want to kick back and relax on the vintage sofa and put your feet up on the rustic coffee table. This is just the thing to get you in the mood to enjoy the upcoming performance. Keith Reddin's *Almost Blue* recalls the lives of four people, each with a stormy past and a not-so-bright future, who are trying to find a way to change their dowdy destiny. The play consists of one set: a run-down, grim apartment inhabited by main character, Phil, impressively played by Rick Bel. The story unfolds as the dark secrets of a man trying to stay out of jail, a guileful ex-con, a damsel in distress, and a rejected pornography writer unravel before our eyes. This is stage noir at its finest.

More action occurs within the final moments of the play than the rest of the 90-minute performance combined – the plot twist is sure to keep any audience member at the edge of their seat, but be sure not to inch up too much, or you might wind up on stage. The play is filled with sexual tension, manipulation, power, and violence that is bound to erupt at any moment. As these talented actors transform themselves into the troubled characters of Phil, Blue, Liz and Steve, their impassioned performance brings us to ask ourselves the questions no one ever dares to dream.

– Rebecca Feigelsohn

A safe space

Obtaining physical space for student activity has long been an issue for student groups, especially if it doesn't serve an academic purpose. There is a lack of campus space that is distinctly ours; much of Shatner is commercial space, the rest allocated to student groups that can provide goods or concrete services. Though these are obviously important, we need more non-judgmental spaces where students can exist without a distinct purpose, define the terms of the space for themselves, and where nothing but respect is required.

In part because of the absence of these spaces, we – a group of eight students – have taken on the second Montreal production of the Radical Vulvas, a show which attempts to create an open, accessible, and respectful space for conversations about women. As a “write-your-own” performance, the Radical Vulvas brings together poets, musicians, storytellers, performers, artists, and audience members in creating a conversation that is unique to the community in which it happens.

We strive to be queer and trans-positive, and we also recognize the importance of taking class and race into consideration when talking about gender oppression. We are for equality, liberation, empowerment, and respect of difference. This is not a classroom; the terms of the conversation are more than academic. They are personal, inclusive, non-judgmental, and based on the needs and words of those present. It occurs in a physical space that we can fully inhabit and shape.

This concept of space is important to The Radical Vulvas because the issues that feminism tries to address

affect everyone, not just women. We choose for this to be a space for women as well as those who care for and respect them, because women's experiences don't exist in isolation. This is a space for everyone. The Radical Vulvas is not a party and it's not a lecture; it is a dialogue and a celebration.

The Radical Vulvas invites anyone and everyone to submit any kind of art on the topic of women and gender, preferably before November 15. The bilingual show is at 8 p.m. on November 21 at the Dragonfly Studios (110 Ann). Email submissions to radicalvulvas@hotmail.com or check out their our web site at radicalvulvasmtl.wordpress.com.

– *The Radical Vulvas*