



Photo: Jason Stang

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT THE EROTIC ANGUISH OF DON JUAN:

“sublimely inventive theatre... eye-popping images...a wondrously imagined meditation on love sacred and love profane...”
The Vancouver Courier

“...melancholy, beautiful... a dreamscape that’s been brilliantly realized.”
The Calgary Herald

“cause for celebration... the amount of creativity is... staggering.”
The Calgary Sun

ABOUT THE OLD TROUT PUPPET WORKSHOP:

“one of the best shows of the year... not to be missed.”
The Globe & Mail

“brilliant, sublime and often hilarious... sheer visual poetry... engages an audience like few productions I’ve ever seen....”
Monday Magazine, Victoria

“...original...hilarious...breathtaking inventiveness...”
The Georgia Straight

“one of the wildest, wackiest, most inventive puppet shows you’re ever likely to see.”
The Toronto Star

“visually stunning and endlessly entertaining.”
The L.A. Times

“hilarious, beautiful and macabre... simply remarkable... too intense to allow its

audience to catch its breath, too beautiful for them to want to.”
Fast-Forward Magazine, Calgary

“dramatically engaging and visually stunning.”
The Boston Globe

“Mind-blowing originality... [The Trouts] are boldly reshaping puppet theatre into sophisticated adult entertainment.”
Fast-Forward, Calgary

“Exquisite... boundless invention... virtuosity...”
Variety Magazine

“Nothing short of genius.”
The Ottawa Citizen

“Pure joy. Great, great theatre.”
Alvina Ruprecht, CBC Radio



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The Erotic Anguish of **DON JUAN**

*With Vanessa Porteous, Mercedes Bátiz-Benét,
and George Fenwick*

Don Juan, that nefarious seducer, ended his life by being sucked into Hell for all eternity. But tonight, he will be dragged forth in chains to repent for his sins, and tell us the terrible tale of his life so that we may avoid his syphilitic path.

But does he repent? Is he really a cynical monster, or a mystical saint? Should we revile him, or strive to be like him? Do we understand Love? Are we doing it right? Will we ever be happy?

The Ghost of Don Juan has come instead to deliver a harangue: he urges us to escape the error of matrimony and dedicate ourselves to love for all. His demonic tormentors, the Trout puppeteers, illustrate his life from birth to damnation, his striving for Heaven, his amorous errors and illuminations. The sermon ends, and we are liberated; the night culminates in a transcendental orgy, as the audience throws away the shackles of its fear and submerges itself in the Great Sea of Cosmic Love.

Most nights, anyway. Depends on the audience.

The Erotic Anguish of Don Juan is a puppet extravaganza in the Old Trout tradition, created over several years and a three month intensive in Mexico. It's also a grand collaboration, drawing together many talents: puppets of multifarious design hurtle about the stage, created by the Old Trouts. Alberta Theatre Projects provided the sets, props, and costumes. Vanessa Porteous provided direction, and Mercedes Bátiz-Benét was co-writer and our cultural liaison in Mexico. And George Fenwick, a Calgary composer, was commissioned to create a score that was recorded by a gang of Calgary's finest classical musicians and, God help us, even a choir.

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SYNOPSIS

The Ghost of Don Juan is summoned from Hell to repent for his sins. A trio of Demons, his jail-keepers, prod him to read his confession – but the audience is full of such beautiful ladies....

Kept in check by a monstrous chastity-belt and the Demons' pitchforks, he tells the tale of his life, and how he became the evil seducer of such renown – and in so doing, he secretly hopes to seduce us to his philosophy, that we might free him from his infernal shackles.

He was born the bastard son of a nobleman, and his mother abandoned him on the church steps to hide her shame, with the final advice: don't be like your father. Resist your beastly nature, and become a priest.

He grows up in the church, striving for holiness, but then another orphan under the church's care strikes temptation into his heart; he cannot resist her. He struggles, but he loves her too much. They are married, and happy.

But the same inability to resist temptation continues to plague him, and he can no more abstain from other women than he could this one. He writhes with guilt, while simultaneously trying to convince us that this is natural and right. Finally he is caught in flagrante delicto by his now-pregnant wife, who is furious. She abandons him as he was abandoned as a child.

Don Juan is tormented by his loneliness until he is visited by a vision of Jesus, who tells him the meaning of true love. Don Juan interprets the message as a validation of his behaviour, and uses it to start a revolution of free love. He tries to raise the revolution right there in the theatre, calling for the audience to throw away the shackles of their puritanical ideas about fidelity, and storm the stage to chase away the jail-keepers.

But they don't. The Ghost is dejected; his revolution has failed again. He succumbs to the Demons, and tells the remainder of his story – how on his deathbed he was offered redemption by the ghost of his betrayed wife, but refused it – he prefers Hell to the vows of marriage, a martyr for universal love.



SHORT SHOW DESCRIPTION

(97 words)

The Ghost of Don Juan is summoned from Hell to repent for his sins, and to tell us the tale of his nefarious life so that we may avoid his fate. But does he truly repent? Is he a monster or a saint? He will attempt to save us from our amorous errors, and deliver a sermon of universal love. In the end, we are liberated from our fears, and what we thought would be a simple evening at the theatre becomes a transcendental orgy that will change us forever.

Most nights, anyway. Depends on the audience.

EVEN SHORTER SHOW DESCRIPTION

(62 words)

The Ghost of Don Juan is summoned from Hell to tell us the tale of his nefarious life. But does he repent? He will attempt to deliver a sermon of universal love. In the end, what we thought would be a simple evening at the theatre becomes a transcendental orgy that will change us forever.

Most nights, anyway. Depends on the audience.



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