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THEATER REVIEW | '666'

## Humor Needs No Words in a Demented World

By [NEIL GENZLINGER](#)

Somebody is missing out on a heckuva marketing gimmick by not pairing “The Irish Curse,” a play about the trials and tribulations of men with small penises, with “666,” the appallingly entertaining production now at the Minetta Lane Theater.

If the guys in “The Irish Curse,” which is in the midst of a run at the SoHo Playhouse, are inadequate in the penile department, the fellows in the riotous, ribald final scene of “666” really, really, really, really aren’t. To paint any clearer a picture than that would risk arrest on an obscenity charge.

The show, seen at the [New York International Fringe Festival](#) last summer, is from the Spanish troupe Yllana and features four men — Raul Cano, Fidel Fernandez, Juan Ramos Toro and Joseph Michael O’Curneen — who convey quite a lot without saying a word. Much of what they convey is pretty vulgar; if you have a low tolerance for such stuff, don’t go.

But if you admire theatrical invention and outrageousness, help yourself. The men portray prisoners on death row, and in a series of skits heavy with pantomime and punctuated by good-natured harassment of audience members, they draw you into a demented world full of violence and sexual urges. A stuffed sheep takes a lot of abuse.

Despite the lack of dialogue, the four manage to create distinctive personalities: the bully, the wimp and so on. And they have refined their mimed bits to the point of perfection, showing respect for the audience by conveying just enough to put the scenes across, never overexplaining. It may seem incongruous to see the phrase “showing respect for the audience” in a review of a production that includes dousing that same audience with (presumably fake) urine, but “666” does not play by the normal rules.

Broken down joke by joke, the piece might seem like nothing but recycled frat-house humor. But the timing is so exquisite and the presentation so startling that the oldest joke in the world, involving a Hustler magazine, is a comic high point. And a delightful sort of dance — a pas de deux, as it were, for guys in nooses — will have you trying to rerun in your mind what you’ve just seen and figure out how it was done.

Some of the daffiest moments in “666” come during various attempts to carry out the inmates’ death sentences; this prison is not going to win any awards from the Society for Humane and Efficient Executions. But as demented as the show is, the fun and games have what might qualify as a serious side: these four nasty fellows end up in hell, imprisoned not by walls, but by their own lusts.

*“666” continues in an open run at the Minetta Lane Theater, 18 Minetta Lane, Greenwich Village; (212) 307-4100, [ticketmaster.com](#).*

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