

Living Room Theatre, North Bennington, VT
Amor and Psyche, written and directed by Randolyn Zinn
Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman.

“The air I breathe is lonely.”

Opposites attract. Amor, or love, and Psyche or soul, for example. Psche represents the spiritual or immaterial part of a human being while love, or sensual attraction, is the physical side of things. Put the two together and you have the essence of this play: the material and the ethereal in conversation with one another. They struggle to bring their attraction and affection to fruition, and come perilously close to failure. However the soul persists and the result of her hard work is delight.

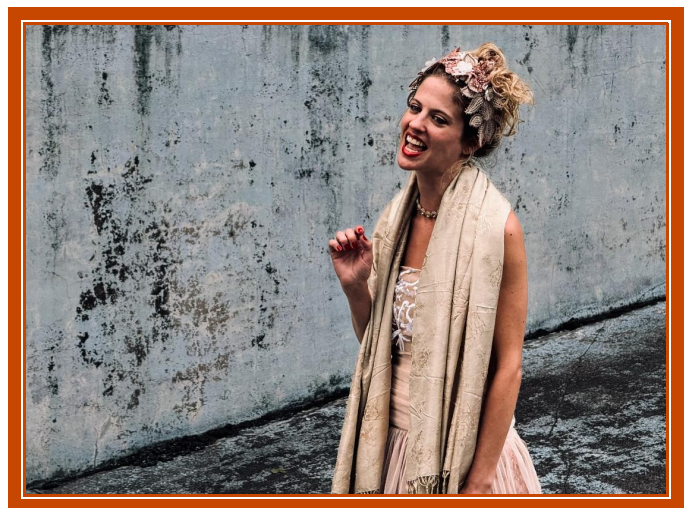


Matt Dallal, Xingrong Chen; Photo: William Shields

Xingrong Chen brings the girl to life and makes her precious. The strength and delicacy of her sweet performance is palpable. We feel her pain and cherish her love. This is truly her finest work with Living Rom Theatre to date.

As her lover, Cupid/Eros/Amor Matt Dallal has to play the different aspects of his historic character as he grows into his final, recognizable self. Dallal also doubles as Pan and Mr. Ram. He does a remarkable job in all of his roles and transforms from despicable to cherishable with charm and

Ramdolyn Zinn has created a modern world for the Greek gods to play in, to work out the differences that threaten to keep a mortal from their midst. She uses her translation of Apuleius’s *Metamorphosis* to forge a contemporary story of a literal Cinderella, mistreated by her mother and sisters, who becomes a queen through her mortal efforts at proving her worth. No simple glass slipper for her. She has to work at everything she accomplishes.



Valeri Mudek; Photo: William Shields

talent.

As his mother, Aphrodite, Valeri Mudek is the only actor other than Chen to play only one role in this play. Her goddess is the most modern woman in the show, constantly changing costumes but never altering her interpretation of the part. She is gorgeous and brilliant. She is also wickedly funny. She, alone, is worth the trip to North Bennington and worth the price of a ticket. The cast is full of excellent talents. Elizah Hill as both the Queen, Psyche's mother, and Persephone, the queen of Hades, delivers well in both roles. Alan McCullough is at his best as Mr. Fleece. Everyone in the cast delivers hilarious characters when called upon to do so.

But the show truly rests on the fine performance by Ms. Chen. She holds the play together with her unrelenting sense of right and wrong. The girl knows what she wants and needs and she is relentless in her search for the right answers to all problems.

Technically, the show is a winner. The author has also directed the play and she Living Room Theatre, North Bennington, VT

The author has also directed the play and clearly she knew exactly what she wanted from the get-go. There is a flow and a charge that worked beautifully in the pool at the Park-McCullough mansion. The costumes designed by Cynthia Flynn are dynamite. The special props created by Angus McCullough and Cinda Morse truly enhance the production. The sound and music coordination by actor Michael Chinworth (an excellent narrator too, by the way) was special.

This is an unusual treat in mid-summer and well worth the trip to North Bennington. I encourage everyone to make the effort. You won't see anything like it anywhere else.

+ 07/25/2024 +

Amor and Psyche plays at the Park-McCullough mansion, 1 Park Street, North Bennington, VT through August 4. Information and tickets are available by calling 802-442-5322 or emailing info@lrvvt.org.



Xingrong Chen; Photo: William Shields