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You Could Call It Theater of the Cabsurd

'Take Me Home' Is for 3 in a Taxi, in Real Time

By NEIL GENZLINGER FEB. 2, 2014



Take Me Home Modesto Jimenez, a.k.a. Flako, in this site-specific work. Adam Morganstem

Driving in New York City is difficult enough. Imagine doing it while performing.

February 2, 2014 – That’s what Modesto Jimenez, a.k.a. Flako, does in “Take Me Home,” the theater world’s latest experiment in shaking up the traditional relationship among audience, performer and performance space. He plays a cabdriver named Ace, and the theater is Ace’s cab. A real cab, which holds three audience members at a time. He drives them on a journey through the city and through a slowly evolving story about a fare beater and an enigmatic woman, all the while observing traffic laws, stopping for jaywalkers and occasionally pulling over to let other drivers go by so he can keep the pace he needs to keep.

He needs to keep that particular pace because the performance is occurring not only inside the cab, but also out on the street. The story that unfolds may be a little thin, but “Take Me Home” certainly has you on full alert throughout as you listen and sometimes talk back to Ace, keep an eye on the cab’s video screen and scan the passing landscape for fragments of street life placed there for your benefit.

A couple dance in a park. Women in red materialize among the pedestrians. Part of the deliciousness of the concept is that you become unsure what is staged and what is just New York. Is that running man someone in the tale Ace is telling you, or is he just a guy trying to catch a bus? Is the delivery truck blocking your way on a narrow downtown street part of the choreography?

Michael Counts’s “The Ride” works a similar gimmick with a tourist bus, but where that experience is overtly theatrical, communal (patrons may find themselves singing “New York, New York”) and includes guides, “Take Me Home” is cerebral and solitary. You make of it what you will.

The show, written by Alexandra Collier and directed by Meghan Finn, began as part of the Incubator Arts Project’s Other Forces festival and has now been extended. It’s not the most fulfilling theater you’re likely to see, but it’s a darned interesting cab ride.

“Take Me Home” continues through Feb. 14; willyoutakemehome.com, 866-811-4111. Pickup location is given to ticket buyers after they make their purchases.

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