

# Chicago Stage Review

Reviews and Features of Chicago Theater

## 500 Clown Trapped – REVIEW

Tue, May 10, 2011



*By Robert Andersen*

A children's show is a children's show is a children's show—not so! Over the past several years I have seen many productions for younger audiences and while they all contain the same basic elements, I appreciate them for what is different. Back in my days of performing, Children's Theatre meant doing the classics, Goldilocks, Red Riding Hood, etc., with one dimensional sets and not so scary realism. Today however, children have much more vying for their attention and they have developed the processes to see through the cardboard house and fuzzy costumes.



Here now comes **500 Clown**, a company whose reputation is legendary for taking adult classics to a new edge. 500 Clown uses an inspired mix of clowning, Vaudeville, and Commedia del'Arte, and while their past productions include *Macbeth* and *Frankenstein*; this is collaboration with Adventure Stage Chicago marks their first foray into a creation for younger audiences. Artistic Director/ performer Adrian Danzig developed *500 Clown Trapped* to open that door.



*500 Clown Trapped* is a combination of metaphors. The audience is the key to seeing what they feel the performers are showing them. The performers present basic scenarios of where or how someone gets trapped. To younger members the visual is simple, “They were trapped in a train.” To the teenager the action plays more of a role, “I got that they were on a train but they actually got out a couple of times and kept going back in. It was like they were so busy trying to escape they didn’t see it happen.” To the psychoanalyst, it is a symbol of man’s inner struggle to combat the forces that drive their lives and force constraints, which no matter how hard you try to free yourself from continually pull you back into your routine. (or maybe you’re just stuck on a train) The great thing is there is no right or wrong answer.



The trio of performers, Danzig, Leah Urzendowski and Tim Heck are all masters in their craft. It is hard not to be when there is little else to distract you. The set is minimal, your mind provides the rest but the actors very skillfully take you with them. There are a couple of moments where things slow down a bit too much, however the ensemble picks it back up and we are off and running again. This is a remarkably clever ensemble that is as fantastically funny as they are freakishly physical.



## **4 STARS**

(“*500 Clown Trapped*” runs through May 21 at Adventure Stage Chicago, 1012 N. Noble Street. 773-342-4141)

**Adventure Stage Chicago - [500 CLOWN TRAPPED](#)**

*500 Clown Trapped* production photos by Johnny Knight.