



# Gracies Dinnertime Theatre

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## Nothing is gonna happen

By Randy (distant correspondent)



This just in! It is official, "nothing is gonna happen." This news was brought to us early Sunday morning by my leading expert in these matters. According to my father there will be no future terrorist attacks. In fact, there will not be anything. "Nothing is gonna happen" as usual. We can all sleep well at night with this knowledge.

This news is, however, slightly disappointing. I will now have to find alternative uses for my three rolls of duct tape, six sheets of thick black plastic, twenty gallons of bottled water, fifty pounds of peanut butter, two hundred cases of Spam and the three thousand dollar radiation suit. Most disappointingly I will not have the chance to read the half dozen books I picked up at Barnes and Noble the other day in anticipation of being shut in and having some free time on my hands. For years I've been wanting to read *The*

*Count of Monte Cristo*, but now since "Nothing is gonna happen" it looks like I will not have the chance to read it any time soon.

On the other hand, if "Nothing is gonna happen," what were terrorists doing on the subway the other day? That's right, there were terrorists on the subway the other day and no one batted an eye or said anything. It was extremely obvious these guys were terrorists. There were two suspicious looking men dressed in fatigues and carrying AR-15 assault rifles. Most remarkably, no one seemed even slightly phased or did anything to report them. It makes me wonder just how secure this city is.

New York City seems more and more like the Wild West every day. Today there are assault rifle carrying, bandito, gunslingers on the subway; tomorrow

we will all be riding horses. Just you wait and see. I swear I saw a tumbleweed blow down 6th Avenue the other day. What is this world coming to? I do not even like being around large animals, let alone do I want to ride one to school. My suspicions and delusions grow more and more into reality every time I see someone wearing cowboy boots. There's even a place called "The Cowboy Bar" where all the cowboys and girls go to congregate. Let us face it: we're doomed.

No fruit-coded warning system will save us now! Even if they should lower the threat level from orange back down to banana, what difference will that really make to us? Let us take a real life case study from the eighties. In Donkey Kong there was an abundance of bananas, yet the threat level never seemed to decrease. In fact, the threat level just seemed to increase exponentially with time even without the presence of oranges. This would lead one to believe that the threat level will continue to increase indefinitely be it rated at banana, orange or apple.

Speaking of apples, is the fact that America has apple pies and George Forman Grills really reason enough to wipe out New York City? If you ask me, it is a bit of an over-reaction. Maybe I did not say that right. What I'm really trying to say is that if they feel like over-reacting, maybe they should do it somewhere

real far away in a place that no one cares about, like Los Angeles. There are very few people who would miss it. After all what is LA but a giant, polluted, gang infested suburb in the desert that is nothing more than a drain on natural resources and exporter of terrible movies.

Then again, I don't suppose it is nice to wish a catastrophic terrorist attack on anyone even if they should be three thousand miles from me, putting me out of harms way. Although, it is not just me they would be saving, but the whole city. What city? The only city in America that is allowed to be referred to as "the city," the one and only New York City. You probably figured that out by now on your own. It was probably a waste of both our time to explain it. I would apologize for wasting your time, but I am not really sorry.

Nor am I sorry if my leading expert's prediction is wrong. Use the information as you may, but I make no guarantee on its accuracy. For all I know "Nothing is gonna happen," but something just may happen after all. I suppose only Nostradamus and the Mayans can predict the future. The future eludes me. That is all I have to say for today. I will be in contact as future events do not unfold.

# Come play with us.



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## Cynical Theatrical Criticism: *The Vagina Monologues*

By Gary Hoffmann

We must remember that *The Vagina Monologues* is, at its most basic level, a collection of stories. The veracity of these stories is irrelevant, and as an audience, we are not told. They are stories about women, obviously, and - perhaps more obviously - they are stories about vaginas. The stories make no assumptions about the nature of society. The stories make no assumptions about the nature of humanity. Fundamentally, *The Vagina Monologues* is a recounting of personal experiences - true or otherwise - which are to be taken at face value, or discarded as such. The audience is free to think about them or to not, and no conclusions are made for the audience. Therein lies the strength of the play, and this is the reason the play has spread so far and gained such wide recognition.

The play is not a call to a particular action. It is not a challenge to come to a particular viewpoint. It does not even ask us to find vaginas beautiful or meaningful. Instead, it simply presents a collection of stories in the hopes the audience will decide of its own accord to undertake that most dangerous of human endeavors: Critical Thought.

The hope is that, in so doing, men will come to a better understanding of women, and, more importantly, women will come to a better understanding of themselves. The fact that the play achieves this in an entertaining way is an indication of its value as a theatrical work.

Unfortunately, those responsible for producing the recent RIT production of *The Vagina Monologues* seem to have understood all this about as well as a cricket understands quantum mechanics (not to offend our cricket audience out there - fact is, not even Heisenberg understood quantum mechanics).

Let's get something straight: *The Vagina Monologues* is a good play. In fact, it was an excellent play. I, for one, was impressed, and it takes a great deal to impress me, especially when it comes to theatre. It was a heck of a lot better than I expected, and I expected it to be good. I heartily recommend everyone to see it when given a chance. Again, *The Vagina Monologues* was an excellent play. The recent RIT production of *The Vagina Monologues*, however, was sorely lacking in some of the fundamental necessities

of a theatre performance, such as a basic understanding of the play by those producing it. Someone seems to have forgotten, if she ever knew at all, that espousing noble ideals in a play is laudable, but you still need some level of talent, and you still need to put some thought into what you're doing.

Let's begin with the fact that it was an RIT production. This means it was produced on a campus that has a large amount of experience with deaf theatre. In particular, RIT is in a rather unique position of being easily able to produce deaf/hearing theatre - a claim even Gallaudet can't make. Indeed, *The Vagina Monologues* has been produced for four years at RIT, each year with a half-hearing, half-deaf cast. Given all this, one might mistakenly leap to the untenable conclusion that the producers would have some experience to draw upon to guide them in making it work as a deaf/hearing production, but fortunately, the producers themselves did not reach this conclusion.

You see, *The Vagina Monologues* was not produced as a deaf/hearing play. Instead, the audience was given the distinct impression it was produced as a deaf play and a hearing play that, by coincidence, were performing on the same stage at the same time and to the same audience. Although given that the audience was forcibly segregated based upon "hearing status" - to borrow terminology from the RIT Climate Survey - one could easily argue the two plays were performing to two separate audiences, as well. Entering Ingle Auditorium, the ushers did their best Auschwitz Doctor impersonation, shooting a cursory glance to see who was wearing a hearing aid and flicking their thumbs left or right, accordingly. I've attended many deaf/hearing plays at NTID and RIT, and this was the first time the audience was actively discouraged from mingling. But then, the play is supposed to encourage dialogue among audience members (dialogue being a natural outgrowth of thought), and naturally that can't happen if they can't communicate, so why bother letting them try?

Then, of course, there's the performance itself, in which the cast was specifically told (not by the director, since there wasn't one, which might be the reason the production obviously lacked direction, but

that's just a wild guess) not to worry about matching voices to signs and vice versa. *The Vagina Monologues* was also the first production I've seen where this occurred. Every other deaf/hearing play at RIT at least has made a modest attempt to ensure ideas were being presented aurally and visually roughly simultaneously. The wonderfully conceived and executed *Vagina Monologues*, however, decided (I can only assume for artistic reasons, since only artists would do something so stupid) to forego this little nugget of common sense (a non-renewable resource) in favor of confusion, an utter lack of cohesion, and runs of dead time on stage for one audience or the other that lasted several minutes at a time (no exaggeration). The dead time alone is unforgivable. Forcing the audience to sit and watch one of the actors stand with visible discomfiture is a mistake even the most amateur theatre troupe knows to avoid. And yet it was a mistake made repeatedly during *The Vagina Monologues*. Often, it seemed the actors went to great lengths to ignore their voice or sign counterpart, or even to refuse the acknowledgement of their existence.

Ostensibly, the reason for this general lack of effort was the widespread apathy of students at RIT. The assumption was nobody in either audience would care what the actors of opposite hearing status were saying. This assumption clearly is based on hard facts that can easily be obtained from some other reality than the one we live in. How many hard of hearing students can hear well enough to understand the voice actors? How many hearing students know sign language? How many hearing students watch interpreters during class to try to learn sign language, and are likely to do the same during a theatre performance? How many members of both audiences notice and get annoyed when one actor gets ahead of the other and begins giving away part of the monologue through the severity of the differences in their body language? The answers to these questions are all the same: none at all. At least, that's the answer in this fantastic other reality dreamed up for *The Vagina Monologues*. Here on Earth, however, it doesn't take much of an intellect to realize the answer is actually, "Enough to make it incomprehensibly asinine to even consider not bothering to match voices to signs."

Some of the actors realized this on their own (thanks, no doubt, to their abundant reserves of that

aforementioned non-renewable resource), and it was obvious which ones did - and for them the audience was extremely thankful. The majority, though, neglected noticing even the simplest of visual cues that would've helped them perform in unison. "It's harder than it looks," you might say. "I know," I might respond, "I've done it plenty of times." Yes, matching voices and signs takes communication and effort from the actors, but whoever says actors are lazy is massively deluded.

Alright, aside from how obvious it was there was no director, aside from the obvious lack of communication between the separate deaf and hearing stage managers, aside from the obvious lack of communication between the separate deaf and hearing producers, aside from the obvious lack of communication between many of the deaf and hearing actors, aside from the enforced lack of communication between the separate deaf and hearing audiences, aside from the horribly amateurish lengths of dead stage time throughout the play, and aside from the fact that the stage managers performed in the play, and thus weren't stage managing (not that this position is needed for a theatrical production, or anything), the production team had a fair understanding of what they were doing, right?

Let's examine this a little more closely. The play, as a whole, is very positive. One cannot argue this fact. A few of the monologues are negative, describing some rather horrible experiences, but most describe neutral or very positive experiences. Monologues such as "Hair," which primarily explains why unshaven vaginas are better and more beautiful than shaven vaginas (and yes, I consider that to be positive), and "He liked to look at it," which is about Bob, the gynecological equivalent of a palm reader, are clearly in the majority in terms of mood. Yet what are the first and last experiences for the audience?

First, the audience was shown a collection of statistics that ranged in mood from "very negative" to "very negative." The slides presented one unilateral factoid after another, presumably to raise awareness that statistics much more often misrepresent facts than faithfully represent them (if the latter is even possible). This is not to say these statistics are not true; I'm sure they are. But even the most reliable of statistics is misleading, at best, when presented out of context. These

charming little factoids also had no relevance to the play, which, again, was about vaginas, not violence, harassment, abuse, rape, and all the other horrible things men do to women, but never vice versa (right?).

At the end of the production the audience was accosted with two cast-written workshops which attempted to answer the question, "What would these workshops look like if they supplemented the play instead of flatly contradicted the positive message of the play with more of the negative misandrist propaganda which gives a bad name to the real feminists who work toward a genuine mutual understanding and respect between the sexes?" The answer, naturally, is that men are evil bastards and the cause of all problems for women. Oh, except for Bob. And except for the whiners in the Men's Workshop who seem to want all men to feel guilty for the actions of the minority of men who are bastards - because guilt will help men and women understand and respect each other. It works for Catholics, after all.

So, surrounding a positive play about vaginas

were two extremely negative bookends unrelated in theme or mood to the play, detracting from the play's message by outright contradiction and irrelevance. One could just as well perform a few scenes from *Bye, Bye Birdie* on either side of *Waiting for Godot*. One might take this as an indication the production team didn't understand *The Vagina Monologues*. One might be right.

Okay, so aside from the lack of direction, aside from the clear lack of communication, aside from an abundance of incompetent mistakes in a production with four years experience that were amateurish even for a tech school (I'm not expecting Broadway, here), and aside from a complete void of understanding in the production team... nope, that's about it.

Go see *The Vagina Monologues* next year. But, unless the RIT production can learn from these mistakes which can only be described as disappointing, go see it at the University of Rochester, or SUNY Brockport, or St. John Fisher, or anywhere else that successfully produces the play each year.

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### **A Tour of the RIT Clubs and Organizations**

Spring is here; well, in theory it should be, but seems to have been held back a little bit. Let's instead focus on the fact that it is Spring Quarter and forget about the weather. Yes, it's springtime: the perfect time to get involved on campus. As a public service, the staff of *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre* has compiled a list of the various groups on campus with which you can spend your free time. While it is by no means comprehensive, everybody who is anybody will find themselves on The List. We hope you find the niche you've been looking for!

- The GDT Staff

#### **Campus Crusade for Christ**

Campus Crusade for Christ is the crystallization of all that is Christianity at RIT. Truly an amazing social group, they benefit the school in many untold ways. They do such simple things as break the monotony of anime signs, which are particularly Pagan, with fantastic little numbers that trumpet Christ in His glory. But their commitment to RIT does not end there. They also bring to campus speakers who have prophesized about RIT. That alone proves this group is worth their

salt, as anyone who prophesizes about RIT must be brilliant. Finally, and last but not least, they are always willing to take your unused debit for you at the end of a quarter. Without CCC, RIT would not be the caring, Messiah beckoning group of people it is today.

#### **College Republicans**

The College Republicans believe in moral consequence. If someone does not think through the consequences of their actions, they should pay for it for the rest of their lives. It is obvious that the people who use government services, like welfare and social security, should be the people who pay for them. And everyone knows that the College Republicans are the first to rise up and defend our nation with a strong offense which will not cease until terrorism is defeated.

#### **IVCF**

The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship is the crystallization of all that is Christianity at RIT. Truly an amazing social group, they benefit the school in many untold ways. They do such simple things as break the monotony of anime signs, which are particularly Pagan, with fantastic little numbers that trumpet Christ in His glory. But their commitment to RIT does

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### SG

If you're the kind of person who wants to feel like you've accomplished something then Student Government is for you. There always seems to be an event or happening sponsored by SG going on. And don't worry about the space because SG plans for about two and a half times more people to come to an event than those who actually do. This can be a problem when they expect five people. SG is responsible for funding any and all student organizations who have submitted Intent to Form forms, and several drafts of budgets. Because SG controls the purse strings, they can keep valuable student resources out of the hands of pointless organizations, like *Gracies Dinnertime*

*Theatre*, and in the hands of organizations that exist for a purpose, like the Objectivist Club.

### BASIC

Brothers And Sisters In Christ is the crystalliza-tion of all that is Christianity at RIT. Truly an amaz-ing social group, they benefit the school in many untold ways. They do such simple things as break the monotony of anime signs, which are particularly Pagan, with fantastic little numbers that trumpet Christ in His glory. But their commitment to RIT does not end there. They also bring to campus speakers who have prophesized about RIT. That alone proves this group is worth their salt, as anyone who prophesizes about RIT must be brilliant. Finally, and last but not least, they are always willing to take your unused debit for you at the end of a quarter. Without BASIC, RIT would not be the caring, Messiah beckoning group of people it is today.

### RIT Gay Alliance

RITGA provides our campus with a forum for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students to meet and get to know (in the biblical sense) other les-



bian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. As well, RITGA creates a supportive atmosphere for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender relationships. But beyond being an *interesting* place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students to get together, RITGA provides an outlet for their creative juices. With some regularity, RITGA hosts a mass chalk-coloring of the quarter-mile, generating amusement, controversy, and more graffiti. In short, RITGA is a great platform for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students to express their lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender pride.

### **EGS**

The Electronic Gaming Society is a relatively new organization on campus, devoted to providing competition for the Anime Club's CS majors. Luckily it seems that the peace has been kept by scheduling the two organizations' events on different days. EGS is steadfast in their goal to reduce the spread of STDs and lower the teen pregnancy rate through a strict abstinence policy. They also are very supportive of the current pro-war effort and prepare the soldiers of the future through extensive Counterstrike and Halo training.

### ***Gracies Dinnertime Theatre***

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre, through an extensive distributing campaign, actively promotes the RITcycle program. Just pick up an issue and drop it in the nearest bin! *GDT* trains the Future Ne'er Do Wells of America by counteracting RIT's social norming campaign. The *Dramatis Personae*, conveniently located on the back of each issue, gives a handy list of potential scapegoats whenever needed. Finally, *GDT* is committed to finding intelligent and creative new words that rhyme with "reporter."

### **Women's Center**

The RIT Women's Center is a great feature for RIT - but it came at least thirty years too late. While it might have made sense in the days when women were a minority and went to school to get their "Mrs." degree, it doesn't have as good of a fit now that women constitute the majority of the US population and are disproportionately more likely to attend college than males. In an effort to try to maintain their effectiveness within the RIT community they offer valuable

services: driving lessons, pro-abortion poetry sessions, protests against female genital mutilation and relationships with uncircumcised men, and handgun training.

### **Anime Club**

The Anime Club is one of the campus's strongest promoters of multi-cultural awareness. Anime is a style of cartoon that originated in Japan. Typically, it features characters that bear uncanny resemblances to Jon Benet Ramsey or Michael Jackson. Because of the characters' childlike appearances, a nod is made to the ancient Greeks. An average Anime Club meeting features socialization time (which permits the members to practice for an activity that is a logical extension: the registered sex offender's neighborhood meet-and-greet) and recognition of the Linux culture by unlicensed public exhibition of copyrighted materials.

### **Socialists**

The socialists are very altruistic. They work so we don't have to! Thanks to people with their beliefs the rest of us can sit on our collective ass all day, doing nothing, and get paid for it. It would be wonderful world if we all lived according to the socialist agenda. Well, wonderful for the 90% of us who would sit back and let the other 10% do all the work. It's a very difficult job, promoting lethargy across the whole campus. Hopefully they keep up the good work.

### **Objectivist Club**

Objectivists help remind us that RIT is as pathetic and blasé as it has always been. There is no club and never will be a club that can alter this reality. They give Hell plenty of souls to torment because God will surely smite them on Judgment Day. With archangel-like prose they can stand before any man and deny his or her fortunes. Luck does not exist from an objective standpoint, and therefore thousands, if not millions, of Leprechauns are safe on St. Patty's Day. With the determination of Mother Theresa they proclaim the country's sole undoing: welfare. For conversation starters one could look to break the ice with a lively social commentary on *Atlas Shrugged*. This book embodies all that is Objectivism and can easily be read in under an hour. With a philosophy so simple how could one not thank the Objectivist club for providing RITers with mental gymnastics?







Date Sun, 16 Feb 2003 17:52:46 -0500  
From Ryan Doherty <@rit.edu>  
To gdt@hellskitchen.org  
Subject [gdt-edit] Awesome Bombs for Valentine's Day Article

Just wanted to say I thoroughly enjoyed the Bombs for Valentine's Day article in your newest issue. Great attack on Bush's war on Iraq. Very funny. And I'm a socialist, so I enjoyed the compliment at the end.

Keep up the good work,  
Ryan Doherty

Ryan,

If you enjoyed the compliment in that article, see our review of the RIT Socialists in this issue. Thanks for the feedback.

- Ed.

Date Mon, 03 Feb 2003 11:45:28 -0500  
From ". " <@afsd.blo>  
To gdt@hellskitchen.org  
Subject [gdt-edit] offended yet?

hm, gdt getting offended, haha, that's funny - haha, hahahahaha, HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH-HAHA. DUDE - THAT'S HILARIOUS!!!! WAHahahahahahaAAAA!!!! YOU ALWAYS TRY TO OFFEND EVERYONE ELSE - AND NOW YOU'RE GETTING OFFENDED!?!?! WAAHahahahahahaHAAAA!!!!

Well, that was pretty much the point. There are plenty of things to be offended about in life; usually people only pick up on the easy ones. GDT never actually tries to be offensive, we just don't try to calm things down "just in case." There are plenty of things worse than GDT around, only they aren't as obvious. I'm glad you picked up on the irony.

- Ed.

 **Gracies  
Dinnertime  
Theatre™**  
**DRAMATIS PERSONÆ**

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The sound of a snow plow over Spring Break

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