

undefined

by Jeff Davis December 11 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/austin/article/BWW-Reviews-Palindrome-Theatre-Presents-an-Exciting-New-Work-in-ATTIC-SPACE-20121211>



Austin's Palindrome Theatre certainly has a short but interesting history. When it opened three years ago, Palindrome stated they would close their doors in December 2012. In those three short years, they've staged seven productions and have earned plenty of critical acclaim. And now as it is December 2012, it's time for their swan song. While it's sad to see a theater bring the curtain down, *The Attic Space* is the perfect fit for Palindrome's finale. The original piece, written and directed by Nigel O'Hearn, is a refreshing, new, and haunting play. While it may borrow from various theatrical styles, *The Attic Space* is unique, innovative, and in many ways unprecedented.

The play focuses on middle-aged married couple Harriett (Babs George) and Harold (Ev Lunning Jr) as they explore their fears, anger, doubts towards their own sanity, and the very nature of their relationship. O'Hearn's writing is brilliantly poetic and is clearly a melting pot of various styles and inspirations including theater of the absurd, existentialist philosophy, and modern American drama. It vaguely feels like feels vaguely like Willy and Linda Loman from *Death of a Salesman* collided with Vladimir and Estragon from *Waiting for Godot*. Though the play owes much to what has come before it, the end result is a completely riveting piece of theatre. In the director's seat, O'Hearn easily brings his words to

life. The time spent with the actors on creating their world, their relationship, and their emotions is quite apparent, and despite the lack of functional furniture in the space (it is an attic, after all, and attic furniture is usually old or broken), O'Hearn manages to find plenty of playing spaces for his characters.

George Marsolek's set design easily compliments O'Hearn's lyric writing style and skilled direction. The attic set is cold, dusty, dark, and immense yet confined. [Erin Fleming](#)'s lighting design is equally exciting. She's a master painter of light and shadow, and her use of cardboard boxes to hide her footlights is deliciously crafty. Tara Cooper also deserves praise for her eerie puppet design, as does Caroline Reck for her puppetry direction.

But it is the cast that truly brings *The Attic Space* to life. As Harold, Ev Lunning Jr is astounding. He has a booming voice but a sincere vulnerability about him. Babs George is phenomenal at oscillating between Harriett's frailty and stubborn strength. Helyn Rain Messenger and Jose Villarreal are also excellent in their brief but important roles of Witness and Stagehand, respectively, especially in the play's final moments.

All told, *The Attic Space* is a thrilling new play that closes Palindrome's door on a high note. With its experimental, avant-garde feel and stellar cast, this show is a must see for anyone with an interest in non-traditional theatre. While most attics are dusty and dirty, this one sparkles.

Run time: Approximately 75 minutes with no intermission.

THE ATTIC SPACE, produced by the Palindrome Theatre, plays the Salvage Vanguard Theater at 2803 Manor Road, 78722. Performances are December 14th – 15th and December 19th – December 22nd at 8pm and Sunday, December 16th at 6pm. Tickets are \$10. Pay what you can performance on Wednesday, December 19th. For tickets and more information, visit www.palindrometheatre.com.