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'Extinction' An Ominous Postscript To The Bromance Genre

by Piya Sinha-Roy
Staff Reporter

A bromance with a moral message? Now there's something that hasn't been tackled by Apatow and Co. just yet. With the frat and brat packs bringing laugh after laugh with increasingly outrageous testosterone-induced antics on the big screen, it seemed far-fetched to think the genre would ever extend beyond comedy.

Enter Gabe McKinley's world-premiere play "Extinction." Though it's easy to feel a touch claustrophobic in the cozy Elephant Space Theatre, within the first five minutes of action, the audience is gripped. Two old college friends reunite for a long-overdue weekend of debauched fun in Atlantic City. Max (Michael Weston - *The Last Kiss*, Fox's *House*) and Finn (James Roday-USA Network's *Psych*) immediately engage in boys-will-be-boys camaraderie, goofing around and referring to the days of their youth. The dialogue initially feels a little stilted, but very soon, the two characters fall back into their close relationship, and the audience begins to sense an undertone of deep secrecy.



From left: Amanda Detmer, Michael Weston, James Roday, and Stefanie E. Frame.
(photo by Kurt Boetcher)

The two friends gradually reveal more and more to each other, changing the dynamic of their relationship with each other and with the audience. It's hard not to get embroiled in the ensuing emotional turmoil. Even though Max is a douche-bag, there's an underlying torrent of confusion, loss and bitterness. Roday's character is also slowly filled out, starting as the stereotypical 'nice guy' and devolving into insecurities and failure. The play takes a sharp twist in the second half, leaving the audience - much to its surprise - stunned.

The message is one of warning: A youth full of carefree hedonistic fun can turn into something much darker as the years go by. It's an insight into the current generation of men who live in a world of excess, where any and everything is readily available at the touch of an iPhone. Weston and Roday deliver outstanding performances, supported by talented co-stars (Amanda Detmer and Stefanie E. Frame) and a poignantly honest script. For skeptics or newcomers to the L.A. theatre scene, seeing this play is bound to restore faith in the power of raw, captivating theatre.

RED DOG SQUADRON presents "Extinction"
Through December 13
Friday/Saturday, 8PM; Sunday, 7PM
Elephant Space Theatre
6322 Santa Monica Blvd.