



JUNETTE HUYNH

ONE POOFY DRESS Studio Theatre's *The Clink* coordinates Elizabethan-style sophistication with a rough-and-tumble, Bronx-type edge. If one thing could get you out of jail free, though, it's that dress.

Studio Theatre clinks more than glasses

The Clink

Written by Stephen Jeffreys
Directed by Sandra M Nicholls
Starring Meredith Bailey, Kate Bateman, Tracy Leigh Campbell, Darren Dolynski, Katherine Gorham, Alana Hawley, Amanda Lisman and Paul Welch
Runs 8-17 February
Timms Centre

LACINA DESJARLAIS
Arts & Entertainment Staff

In the ghettos of London, trouble is brewing and the hoodstars are getting restless waiting on Queen Elizabeth's death. But while the peeps of London may have trouble ahead, Studio Theatre has nothing but smooth sailing on the horizon. The team of ambitious BFA students

are gearing up to bring the slums of London to the heart of campus in their second-semester production of Stephen Jeffreys' *The Clink*.

As Queen Elizabeth I lays dying, her underhanded privy cabinet minister Warburton (Paul Welch), schemes to gain power over the people. To further his plan, he has his daughter Beatrice enlist the help of the big-mouthed Lucius Bodkin, who roams the red-light district near the clink, London's infamous prison, trying to find work with his brother.

He ends up helping Warburton by delivering an insult-filled speech worthy of Borat to a number of foreign delegates, which leaves Lucius with his neck on the chopping block.

Using an eclectic fusion of Elizabethan blank verse and modern-day rap, the BFA class is ready to break

it down ye-olde-day style, with enough British culture and hip-hop beats to make even Ali G proud. But, according to fourth-year BFA student Katherine Gorham, who plays Warburton's daughter Beatrice, the play isn't really that gangsta.

"It might be close to Da Ali G Show, I can see where the parallel is. Blank verse does have a particular rhythm. The characters that come the closest to rapping are the characters that live out on the street. For them, speaking in rhythm is close to rap culture today. You won't see a whole bunch of white people on stage going 'Unhhh break it down,' but there are some funky beats happening," Gorham says with a laugh, briefly adopting a Fifty Cent-esque rap pose.

While *The Clink* may be fundamentally a period piece, in this case

old doesn't necessarily mean boring. Gorham says that in addition to flouting convention by mixing in the hip-hop flavour, the director has also chosen to add a few other original touches to the play's props and costumes.

"There are anachronisms in the play, and I bet there's enough of the rap to make it a good joke for the audience," Gorham says. "There are some other things too, where the director has taken hints of other time periods and places and brought them into the Elizabethan world. The main character wears Converse sneakers and there's even a typewriter in one scene."

Not only does the play mirror some of the slang and linguistics common in red-light districts, it also contains hidden references to some of the modern conflicts in these areas and

the great need for change that underlies them.

"Some characters have to commit a violent act or an act of revolution to try and effect some change and gain some [personal] freedom," Gorham observes. "It's about revolution—one that didn't quite happen. It's about the change from one power structure to another and how those changes affect people."

With its funky beats, elements of black comedy and relevance to modern-day societal issues, *The Clink* should earn some mad love from the critics, if not at least their respect.

"Come see it because it's funny in a really unconventional way; see it because the people in the drama department are phenomenally talented and come see it because it's a fascinating story," Gorham says.

Frida K brings together former crew, world art lovers

Frida K

Written by Gloria Montero
Directed by Peter Hinton
Starring Allegra Fulton
Runs 6-25 February
Citadel Theatre

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN
Arts & Entertainment Staff

It's not everyday that the same group of people get back together to do the exact same play ten years later, but for the world-renowned production about Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, that's exactly what happened.

"It was a miracle that the timing worked out for everybody because they all work at places all over the world," says Allegra Fulton, the sole star of the 90-minute play. "Somebody must have wanted it all to happen."

Fulton is also the daughter of *Frida K* playwright Gloria Montero, and the play was written with her in mind and was given to her as a gift for her 33rd birthday. In 1994, *Frida K* debuted at the Toronto Fringe Festival with

Fulton as Frida, and when the run finally came to a close in New York City in 1996, she left the role with no intention of returning. In fact, Fulton laughingly admits that she didn't miss being Frida Kahlo during the ten-year break. So why return?

"[Director Peter Hinton] asked me if I would do it again and it seemed like the right place to do it," Fulton says. "And after ten years away from it, it was the right time to do it. I was going to be the exact age [Kahlo] is in the play so I thought that was interesting," Fulton explains. In the play, 44-year-old Kahlo is getting ready for her first solo exhibition in Mexico.

Despite her confession of not having missed the role, Fulton couldn't be more excited about Kahlo's growing popularity.

"I think the world's perspective of [Kahlo] has changed a great deal in that there's been a movie made of her," Fulton says. "Her painting, *Roots*, sold at Sotheby's in May for the most any Latin American painting has ever sold for."

Kahlo never gained the same height of popularity in Canada as she has elsewhere, but according to Fulton, Kahlo's story is one with which virtually anyone can relate.

"Anyone who lives in this world can identify with somebody who had grave difficulty by complete fate and overcame their difficulty by sheer force of will and made some very beautiful art out of it," Fulton says. "Ultimately, I think [*Frida K*] is a human story and that it's just about somebody overcoming their odds just like Helen Keller did."

For many people, Kahlo is an ambiguous personality. Even Fulton has a hard time of clearly defining her.

"She's about 25 people. I think in some ways, you have to come and see the play to really understand that," Fulton says. "In the show itself, I play her as so many different people because she was a lot of different people as we all are. You are never the same person, really. So who Frida Kahlo is? Ehh ... I don't think it's possible to really answer that."

