



'Deceit' brings gripping drama to JOB stage

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Pre-buy tickets or get in line early to catch "Deceit," by Derek Trautwein that grips the audience in the first minutes and keeps them riveted to their seats throughout the hour production.

Relevance Productions consistently brings quality productions to the Kansas City Fringe Festival and this year extends that tradition. Derek Trautwein offers up his best play to date with "Deceit." The dialogue grips the audience. The actors, perfectly cast, understand their character and build them throughout. The set, very minimal, functions well and creates good movement to help the audience picture the situation.

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The story focuses on a troubled writer who has suffered a writer's block after publication of a best-selling book. He's managed to get by with royalties, but he has not had the proper inspiration to pen a subsequent novel. As the play unfolds, the audience learns that a traumatic situation hinders him from concentrating on this new novel.

During this time, he has fallen in love, booted his best friend and roommate, and moved a girlfriend/fiancé into his apartment. At that point, his life really begins to spin out of control. Trautwein slowly uncovers more and more details about the roommate, the fiancé, and a self-centered, determined, "never-take-no-for-an-answer" publisher who wants a new best-selling novel. (Think of a Cruella DeVille character or one of Glenn Close' classic villains).

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“Russ is still riding the success of his first best-seller, ‘Lament.’ Tragedy strikes, blocking his creative flow and drive until he meets Clare. From their soulful connection and love, they find strength and inspiration while others pressure him for his next big hit. Before Russ can share a new story, he must find the disparity between truth, lies, and perception. From the playwright behind past hits “Revelations,” “The Islander,” and “Lookin’ for a Fight.” Starring KC Fringe favorite Scott Cox.” (KC Fringe)

Really dominant performances came from the four person cast of Scott Cox, Jennifer Loumiet, Jeannie Blau, and Ryan Morehead. Direction came from the writer, Derek Trautwein. Lighting and sound was by Warren Deckert.



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Jeannie Blau absolutely dominates the stage in every scene. She’s brilliant and not like ever before. Scott Cox, always a

strong force at Fringe Festivals turns in another unbelievably good character. Jennifer Loumiet does not back off her character, either. As a reviewer, I wanted a scene with Blau's character where the women face off. (Who does not like a good cat fight in theater productions?) And, Ryan Morehead, not seen on stage for years delivers a critical character and makes the audience feel his emotions in his major monologue. All four actors give brilliant, round, full-bodied characters. They could all compete on Broadway against America's finest.

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"Deceit" just keeps the audience guessing what could cause the divide amongst characters, why the title, what the resolution. And, like all good thrillers the answers come in a fever pitch of activity toward the end and explain the title. As the play ends, the motivation of the characters comes into focus.

The piece is well-written and finished. It needs a little polish and is ready for a full-blown production. Trautwein said that the piece was cut a bit for the Fringe format and for its

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Kansas City debut. The show is worth of a full-fledged production.

Tags: "Deceit" review, Just Off Broadway Theatre, Kansas City Fringe Festival, Kansas City Theatre, Kansas City Performing Arts, Kansas City Arts & Entertainment