



'T-Money is Cancelled' shows public movement's wide shift

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The Internet and social media produced a whole new aspect to news, scandal, and public information sharing as evidenced in Prisca Jebet Kendagor's new production "T-Money Is Cancelled."

The comedy shows the influence of social media—including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other chat and media formats. Information is leaked, distributed, and widely read, whether truth, lies or anything in between as rapid-fire pace so that a simple situation can and will explode over social media and spin out of control on a regular basis.



Such is the case with recording artist, T-Money. Seems the bad boy of recording has a history of bad choices which included taking videos of underage girls he molested. And with video evidence, obviously he and the victim knew it was happening. Now, earlier escapades (nope not Ice Capades) have surfaced, displaying T-Money, all his glory and his sexual liaison with minors and others.

The problem is that the label continues to make money on him while his popularity soars. He needs to clean up his act. The company needs to drop him for the bad publicity he's delivering. But the bad publicity is selling his recordings, trending on social media and creating a media storm which means publicity—and money in their pockets.



“When a public figure’s fame and fortune is threatened by the scorn of social media, it’s up to his team to spin the pieces of this scandal into gold.....but should they?” (KC Fringe)

The cast is: Rebecca Ralstin, Davis DeRock, Yetunde Felix, Barbara Handy. The play is written by Prisca Jebet Kendagor, directed by Julia Moriarty, and stage managed by Alexa Cioffi -Abt. The show was presented in the 2019 Fringe Festival on the Jerome stage of The Unicorn Theatre.

What a great cast! Ralstin can and does play a wide variety of roles in local theatre and past Fringe shows. Her wide range takes her from broad comedy to dramatic roles. She fits well into this part as a public relations specialist who tries to keep the lid on T-Money, Joining here in this effort, Davis DeRock plays the anxious lawyer hoping in and out of the room because of fear of disclosures he cannot defended. DeRock,

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generally known for drama needs to be discovered for his comedic timing and splendid comedy performance.

Yetunde Felix, fairly new to the KC theatre scene recently earned her MFA from UMKC and continues to build her resume. It's time to earn that lead role with the chance to show her depth as an actress in comedy and drama. She's very good in "T-Money Is Cancelled." Barbara Handy is a new face to KC Fringe and portrays a stern executive who takes all the bad publicity and sexual misconduct with ease. Her character demonstrates that the happenings are just another day in the life. She's funny. She's forceful. And she shows strong stage presence.

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The casting could not be better. "T-Money Is Cancelled" only

runs about 40 minutes and could have used another device or situation to add to the length, or possible another scandal that stops the current one from trending for awhile. But the premise is strong and resembles the daily spin on-going on the news channels. Major stories are brushed aside for the newest “dirt” that happens each day.



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Probably the biggest success in this is the performance of Davis DeRock. His character changes the most from his great comic timing to the dramatic situation he finds himself when personally and accidentally drawn into a case of child molestation of his girlfriend and his client. Davis builds and performs the character with ease. DeRock needs to be discovered and cast as the lead in a major production. Producers, casting directors, take note.

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