

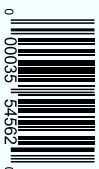
VARIETY

**Legit Review:
I Hope They Serve
Beer on Broadway
by Tucker Max**



Kelly Thorne as Jamie

***“It’ll take a drink or
three to appreciate
this Off Broadway
showcase of
bad behavior”***



How drunk do you have to be to laugh yourself stupid at
“I Hope They Serve Beer On Broadway?”

Christopher Carter Sanderson’s raunchy adaptation of the
“literary works” of Tucker Max beckons its target audience
(young, mostly
male slightly
buzzed) to this
off-off venue, four
flights up in a funky
part of town where
tickets are \$20 and
you can get up
during the show to
buy a \$5 beer
(Import labels \$7).

But it remains to be
seen whether this
club crowd will be
quite as amused
when the show
transfers to a
house where tix are
\$51.50 a pop



As the founder of Gorilla Repertory Theater, Sanderson has cred as a downtown rebel. That should explain his affinity for this transgressive source material, the crude-and-rude short stories in Tucker Max's 2006 best-selling book (and 2009 flop movie), "I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell." If there's some way to amplify the vulgarity of Max's boorish autobiographical sketches of big boys behaving badly, Sanderson will find it.




On a literary level, the adaptation is actually pretty good: direct, succinct, and to the point — the point being that grown men will regress into infantile behavior on matters of drink, sex, and the grown women who obviously threaten their manhood.

The settings for these juvenile misadventures of Max and his frat house drinking buddies are familiar territory: restaurants where Max gets disgustingly drunk trying to go off the charts with a breathalyzer; bars where he offends (and occasionally vomits on) well-bred southern girls (and the occasional midget); and the countless bedrooms where he sexually humbles (and occasionally humiliates) the kind of masochistic Junior Leaguers this kind of fool tends to attract.




The set pieces achieve the levels of grossness they promise, and if the laughs feel strained, it's likely because the production values are cheesy and the physical comedy lacks directorial flair. As challenging as it may be to come up with imaginative ways to stage projectile emissions of body fluids, it's even harder to get an honest laugh with a largely amateurish cast.





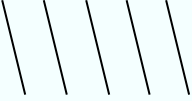
There are two big pluses to the show, which sold out its run at the Arias Theater and will stay intact when it moves a few blocks up Eighth Avenue and reopens July 5. The first advantage, of course, is the open bar. (When a handful of people got up and left the house after one particularly coarse sketch about anal sex, I pegged them as walk-outs. But, no, they were only grabbing a couple of beers.)

The other major selling point is Abe Goldfarb, who adopts the debauched persona of Tucker Max as narrator. To be sure, this Gorilla Rep veteran (who is set to play Hamlet in an upcoming production) is no Garrison Keillor. But he's played his share of Shakespearean fools and understands the first rule of comedy — don't condescend, not even to a wiseass college kid showing off for his pals. In character as a modern-day Rabelaisian rogue, Goldfarb makes no apologies for the adolescent behavior of this narcissistic idiot, delivering a breezy and boisterous perf that celebrates the idiot's total lack of redeeming virtues.

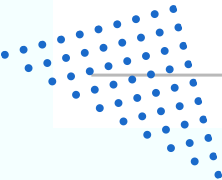


“I may be an asshole ...” Tucker the Terrible proudly admits. And from the audience comes a woman's cool, clear response: “May be?!”





The dozen other thespians in the cast double and triple up as the guys Tucker drinks with, the strangers he offends, the women he debases and the audience he craves. The strenuous over-acting by some of these players (including all of the women) only achieves a genuine comic style in scenes that pitch Max and his goofy friends into confrontational situations with other social sub-groups — like the fun-loving patrons of a gay nightclub and the armed-and-dangerous brawlers in a redneck bar. The kind of guys who would welcome a visit from frat boys and stag parties.



Roy Arias Theater; 99 seats; \$20 top, through June 29. Reopens July 5, 2013 at the 777 Theater; 150 seats; \$51.50 top. Reviewed June 27. Running time: ONE HOUR, 30 MIN.

Production: A presentation by Nudity, Adult Content & Strong Language, LLC, and Andre Mistier of a play in two acts, based on the literary works of Tucker Max, adapted and directed by Christopher Carter Sanderson.

