

UNPREDICTABLE WOMEN AND MONSTERS

Reviewed by Joe Madrid

LA OPINION

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(Original Review, in English)

"Unpredictable Women and Monsters," Nell Stewart's one-woman World Premiere now playing at the Haunted Studios in Hollywood, is quite a showcase.

Written, directed, designed and performed by Stewart, "Unpredictable Women and Monsters" is a theatrically revealing movable famine of the memory that, under Stewart's artistic direction, still stirs up an ironically delightful series of missteps and romantic lost chances.

Set in her mostly unadorned singles apartment, which includes a bed and nightstand, sofa and coffee table, refrigerator and an assorted number of objects, the play sets up a "dialogue" with the audience that allows Stewart to pursue and eradicate the monsters of her memory.

But first, there is the matter of present company to attend to, and as the stage is lit and Stewart's character makes her unassuming entrance, it is soon evident that we are in for one funny, shocking, and somewhat surprising evening. Stewart's character quickly introduces herself, and, after grabbing something from the refrigerator, invites us for a snack. With the food and drink, she also offers a number of unsolicited comments about the audience, while letting us know a little more about herself.

Her manner is brash and loud and a little unsettling, which contrasts sharply with the tales she has to tell. She tells of being the last child in a large family, fighting for recognition that leads later to a communication breakdown with her family, especially her mother.

Her mood shifts suddenly and she is off on another subject, talking about the signs of a failed relationship. She talks about some monsters she has met on the dating scene.

Fangs in place, she swoons "Good evening, my lovely" in a thick Transylvania accent. "The moon is full, don't you think it's getting late?" she asks, fangs bared for all to see. Meanwhile, accompanying the count as a damsel-in-distress dating wannabe, she shifts places and motivational tone of voice, as she innocently and demurely answers in the negative. "It's getting late. There's still time for you to go," the monster states. The damsel-in-distress merely turns away, revealing an accommodating plunging neckline.

And then she's off on another revealing anecdote, with more personality changes than Sybil.

Stewart's orange-cropped hair and classical beauty facial features allow for a close-up fascination for the personality quirks and the tales she has to tell. As Stewart calls up and acts upon some of her—and Everywoman's—unfortunate experiences as a woman, she does not do it as a man-basher. It is as she describes it, a catharsis, for male and female, audience and performer.

Performances are scheduled for Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. through January 30 at the Haunted Studios, 6419 Hollywood Blvd. (between Wilcox & Cahuenga) in Hollywood. For reservations call 213-850-8925.