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BWW Review: FADE at MOXIE

by E.H. Reiter Nov. 4, 2018



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FADE is a two person play that tackles some timely questions on balancing culture, success, and authenticity both in real life and in the La La Land known as Hollywood now playing at MOXIE Theatre through November 11th.

Hollywood is the land of dreams, tv shows, palm trees and sunshine. Lucia (Sofia Sassone) a Mexican born novelist turned tv show writer who moved to LA from

Chicago finds that she isn't finding the city of dreams to be all that it could be, she doesn't even like palm trees or sunshine. During a late night move into her new office she meets Abel (Javier Guerrero) the janitor to whom she automatically starts speaking Spanish to his irritation. A tattooed, Mexican-American Abel finds himself the unlikely confidante as Lucia talks about how hard her job is; her boss ignores her, her coworkers belittle her, she has no friends. Meanwhile, Abel is emptying the trash and organizing her office.

The television show is so generic that on a show with a "Latinx female lead", Lucia is stunned to find the other writers haven't bothered to figure out where the character is from, because that's not important. Lucia gripes "*this show is basically Taco Bell*", and that she is the diversity hire because she's Mexican. She's even more bothered when Abel chuckles at this as Lucia wails in her private office, sitting on the couch, about the unfairness of it all.

"*Mostly I know people who don't get jobs because they are Mexican,*" Abel says.

Directed by Dr. Maria Patrice Amon, their first interactions are full of class and cultural similarities and differences. This makes their conversations deliberately awkward as Lucia's upbringing as a privileged girl in upper class Mexico varies greatly from Abel's life in the United States.

It's an unlikely friendship; they share frustration over no one being able to say their names correctly, but when Abel says he's Mexican but Lucia points out that he was born in the United States while she ponders about the authenticity of growing up in Mexico.

While reminiscing over missing the delicious street food of Mexico, Lucia adds that she once got sick from eating it as a way of gaining some sympathy for her plight. "*It's still a third world country,*" she explains. She then loses her street cred when she goes on to explain about her maid and in the face of Abel's laughter at her privilege defends herself by saying "*everyone has a maid, even maids have maids.*"

Yet, they eventually bond and are equally horrified when Lucia's boss overlooks her actual writing skills to use her as a translator to explain to his Spanish-speaking maid how important it is that his magazines be laid out in the proper order or else it ruins his entire day.

As their friendship grows, Lucia finds comfort and support from Abel when things get difficult and Abel finds a friend in someone who works in the building who isn't on the janitorial crew. They have a shared (and entirely irrational) hatred of Twizzlers.

As Lucia strives for success writing for this show, it becomes clear that language and class barriers are not only present with her co-workers, but also between her and Abel

<https://www.broadwayworld.com/san-diego/article/BWW-Review-FADE-at-MOXIE-20181104>

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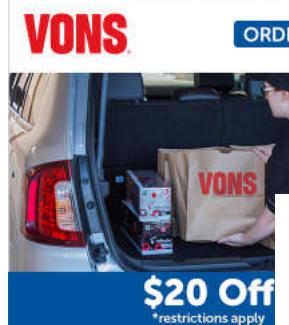
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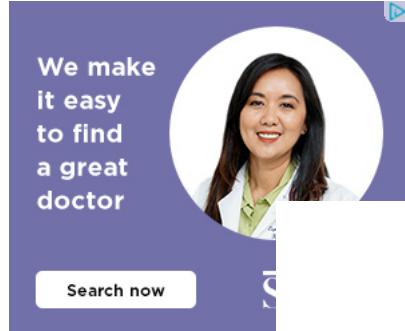
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Sassone is excellent as she keeps Lucia bubbly and as likable as possible in a tricky role, her privileged insistence that she is an underdog, and increasingly entitled behavior make it hard to root for her as the show goes on. Lucia's enthusiasm and exasperation with culture, and their representation on TV feels true even as her character contributes to the very same problem.

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Guerrero is fantastically sympathetic and genuinely likeable as Abel. His quiet and nuanced performance of someone trying to do what it takes and provide for his family is what anchors the piece, and allows the audience to believe that these two divergent characters could find friendship.

It is the performances of Sassone and Guerrero that elevate these characters and material to the point where the audience is emotionally vested in their actions. At the performance I attended you could hear urgent whispers from the audience to the characters of what they should or should not do.

The characters as written would benefit from additional depth, with the actions of the third act so predictable it was a bit disappointing. Written by [Tanya Saracho](#), who has written for "Scandal", "How To Get Away With Murder", and "Girls" can't seem to shake some of the TV soap operas she writes for as some of the plays character actions and backstory seem more apt in a telenovela.

The Spartan and neutral office designed by Kristen Flores makes the perfect backdrop for these class and culture distinctions to play out upon, with added depth provided by Mextly Almeda's excellent lighting. Scene transitions and some cultural flair are provided by some perfectly chosen songs by sound designer Lily Voon.

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FADE, playing through November 11th at MOXIE Theatre, this is a thought provoking play tackles class, culture, ambition, and makes you wonder what or who are you willing to become to succeed?

FADE is presented in collaboration of Moxie (which specializes in theater by and about women) and TuYo Theatre, a brand new Latinx company of which the Director Amon is co-founder. For ticket and show time information go to www.moxietheatre.com

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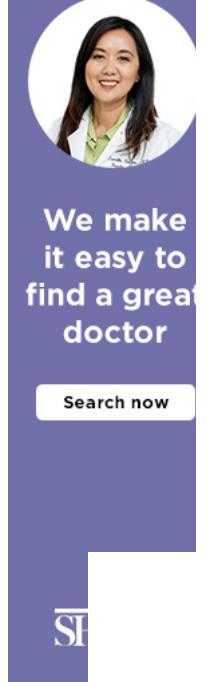
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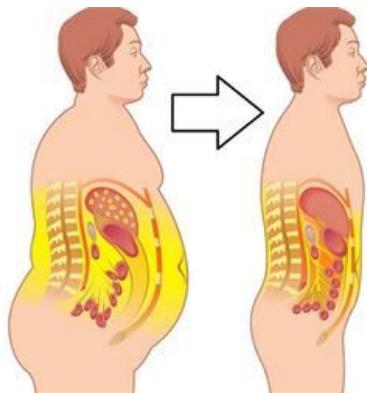


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