

## Fringe Binge: Five-star aliens

Posted in [Upstaged](#) by [Adam Feldman](#) on August 26th, 2009 at 7:42 pm



### Devil Boys from Beyond

Well, here we are again. Another day, another 15 Fringe reviews. As of later tonight, the official tally—for those of you who for some reason are not tracking it as closely as I—will be this: 188 down, lucky 13 to go. You can read all the reviews yourself, of course, on [our massively popular and now tantalizingly almost-complete Fringe Binge 2009 page](#). The highlight of today's crop is a show I'm lucky to have reviewed myself: the giddy, campy and quite wonderful *Devil Boys from Beyond*. The ramshackle aesthetic of the show ensures that it could comfortably move to a post-Fringe run with almost no alterations necessary. Meanwhile, though, I urge you to catch one of its three remaining performances at the Actors' Playhouse, where it runs through Sunday, August 30. (Call 866-468-7619 for tickets.) Below is an early look at my over-the-moon review of this alien romp.

\*\*\*\*\* [FIVE STARS] Buddy Thomas's deliriously campy sci-fi spoof, one of the most entertaining shows I have ever seen at the Fringe Festival, is naughty, gleeful fun. A pair of Eisenhower-era New Yorkers—a hard-nosed lady reporter, Mattie Van Buren (Paul Pecorino), and her boozy ex-flame, Gregory Graham (Robert Berliner)—investigate an alien landing in the backward town of Lizard Lick, Florida, while fending off Mattie's nosy and archconservative rival, Lucinda Marsh (Chris Dell'Armo). The out-of-this-world visitors in question turn out to be smoothly gorgeous muscle studs, who have attached themselves to the town's sex-starved older women. Milking this setup for all its worth and then some, the show opens a fabulous portal to the past: not just the paranoid world of the 1950s, but the legendary drag romps of Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company and Charles Busch's Theatre-in-Limbo from the 1960s through the 1980s. *Devil Boys from Beyond* is a necklace of golden links to that wild theatrical tradition. The play's director, Kenneth Elliott, also helmed most of Busch's early work (much of which featured Andy Halliday, who appears here as innkeeper Dotty Primrose). The expert Pecorino—who at times bears an odd resemblance to Madonna, except that he can act—is a veteran of the Off Broadway revivals of Busch's *Psycho Beach Party* and Ludlam's *The Mystery of Irma Vep*. And Everett Quinton, the widower Ludlam himself, gives a simply astonishing performance as a horny, elderly Lizard Lick resident: This is clowning of the very highest order. Jabbing their lewd lines with hatpin-prick timing, their eyes flashing like paparazzi cameras, the marvelous actors of *Devil Boys from Beyond* are fashioning something very silly and special at the Actors' Playhouse. If there were any justice in this mixed-up world of ours, the whole show would be tractor-beamed Off Broadway tomorrow.—*Adam Feldman, Theater and Music writer*

## DEVILISHLY FUNNY



Rating: ★★★★★

Last updated: 3:12 am  
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Everett Quinton (left) and Paul Pecorino are delightfully demented at the Fringe Festival.

CHEAP in all the right ways, the fast, taw dry and very funny "Devil Boys From Beyond" is the Fringe Festival at its best. Drawing inspiration from such screwball comedies as "His Girl Friday" and '50s sci-fi B-movies (Ed Wood looms large), author Buddy Thomas and director Kenneth Elliott turn their cut-rate budget into an asset, and provide a great vehicle for its shameless cast.

When aliens are sighted in Lizard Lick, Fla., the New York Daily Bugle sends alcoholic photographer Gregory Graham (Robert Berliner) and Pulitzer-winning writer Mattie van Buren (Paul Pecorino) to investigate. (Competition is heating up in the news business -- the paper's editor warns that "by the end of 1956, there may be only seven dailies left in New York!")

Down in the swamps, the bickering former lovers meet nutty middle-aged gals Florence Wexler (Everett Quinton), who rang the alarm about the invaders from outer space, and motel owner Dotty Primrose (Andy Halliday). Mucho mayhem ensues, including insta-pregnancies for the menopausal women.

Admittedly, the plot doesn't matter all that much, and the dialogue isn't as witty or cutting as it should be, though Thomas works in a final twist that neatly references current concerns for marriage equality and allows for a nice display of beefcake.

Instead, it's all about watching the actors -- especially the ones in drag -- gleefully throw themselves into their, ahem, art.

His chin jutting out, his back arched in angular defiance, Pecorino pays tribute not so much to classic Hollywood broads as to Charles Busch's interpretation of classic Hollywood broads.

Halliday's Dotty is a hoot of an old coot, strutting around in embroidered toreador pants while the actor contorts his face in ways usually found in Cubist paintings.

And then there's Everett Quinton, looking increasingly demented in a series of outlandish outfits. Not bothering to "feminize" his gruff voice and bruiser physique (at one point he looks like Ben Gazzara in a purple teddy), Quinton, a former member of the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, embodies the no-holds-barred fun of downtown camp.

The way he drawls out lines like "Ta-ta, honey child" as if they were Southern-fried taffy is irresistible, and a good portion of his dialogue gets drowned in the audience's laughter. It's a marvel to see him turn low comedy into such a high.

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**DEVIL BOYS FROM BEYOND Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. South; 866-468-7619. Through Sunday.**

## Devil Boys from Beyond

Madcap Productions at the Actors' Playhouse as part of the New York International Fringe Festival



Reviewed by Mark Peikert  
August 24, 2009



PHOTO CREDIT  
Dixie Sheridan

Everyone involved in the Fringe, take note: "Devil Boys From Beyond" is how a no-budget show should be done. Director Kenneth Elliott and playwright Buddy Thomas haven't allowed a lack of funds to prevent them from putting on a whiz-bang comedy, equal parts Charles Busch and 1950s schlock.

Reporters Gregory (Robert Berliner) and Mattie (Paul Pecorino) jet to Florida to investigate reports of aliens, shadowed by Mattie's rival Lucinda (Chris Dell'Armo) and stymied by oversexed townsfolk Florence (Everett Quinton) and Dotty (Andy Halliday). The special effects are hilariously low-tech, but the performances are deliriously inspired. Quinton and Halliday's scenes together are especially potent, two old pros having a ball chewing scenery.

Only Pecorino disappoints, with an inconsistent performance that grows wearing. Elliott would do well to rein him in (and cut Mattie's song, which kills the momentum), but "Devil Boys" is an uproarious homage to C-movies and the golden age of camp; an uneven lead performance is just part of that package.

*Presented by Madcap Productions as part of the New York International Fringe Festival at the Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. South, NYC.*

*Aug. 23–30. Remaining performances: Thu., Aug. 27, 4:15 p.m.; Fri., Aug. 28, 7:30 p.m.; Sat., Aug. 29, 4 p.m.; Sun., Aug. 30, noon. (866) 468-7619 or [www.fringenyc.org](http://www.fringenyc.org).*



## Devil Boys from Beyond

# New York International Fringe Festival

reviewed by [Robin Rothstein](#)

Aug 23, 2009

If you've been jonesing for the bygone days of Theatre-in-Limbo's campy drag-fests such as *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, *Psycho Beach Party*, or *The Lady In Question*, you're in luck! *Devil Boys from Beyond*, the larger-than-life homage to leading ladies and low-budget sci-fi films of the '50s, has landed at the New York International Fringe Festival and invaded the Actors Playhouse!

It's 1957 and The New York Daily Bugle is about to go under unless it breaks a big story—and fast! Bugle editor Gilbert Wiatt convinces his Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Mattie Van Buren to fly down to Lizard Lick, Florida to investigate rumors of a spaceship landing and missing townspeople. Along for the ride is Daily Bugle photographer, Gregory Graham, who also happens to be Mattie's boozing, skirt-chasing ex-husband, and lurking just behind the pair is Lucinda Marsh, Mattie's conniving rival, who hopes to scoop the story. Once in Lizard Lick, Mattie and Gregory meet Florence Wexler and Dotty Primrose, two homely old bags who, to Mattie's complete disbelief, are married to hunky young husbands. Something is indeed amiss in Lizard Lick, and Mattie intends to get to the bottom of it.

The production values of *Devil Boys from Beyond* are diva-liciously kitschy, and all the elements of the show—the writing, acting, direction, and design—work together flawlessly. Paul Pecorino as Mattie is a dead ringer for Joan Crawford, his eye movements alone eliciting some of the biggest laughs in the show. The entire cast, though, knows how to deliver looks and lines with precision. Chris Dell'Armo as the towering Lucinda Marsh is a juicy foil, and Peter Cormican, as the harried Gilbert Wiatt, along with Robert Berliner as handsome rake Gregory Graham, both play their roles with hilarious straight-faced intensity. Ridiculous Theatre Company vet Everett Quinton as cranky local Florence Wexler, and Theatre-in-Limbo alum Andy Halliday as Lizard Lick's sassy motel owner, Dotty Primrose, are true masters of this milieu, and both are a hoot and half. Playing the hunky young aliens, Jacques Mitchell and Jeff Riberdy possess a naive charm that serves their roles well.

Director of camp extraordinaire, Kenneth Elliott is back in his element and he ties up all the goings-on with a big, loony bow. His direction is clever and detailed, and he generally keeps things moving at an energized clip. There are a handful of spots where the pacing falters, but that might have more to do with the piece needing some internal pruning. Buddy Thomas's script is not only funny, but surprisingly intelligent at times given the silly premise, and he sneaks in his share of social commentary. (Aliens are apparently light years ahead of us earthlings on marriage equality.) Gail Bardoni's stylized costumes range from of the period to delightfully outrageous, and Gerard Kelly's wig designs are expertly wrought. Vivien Leone's lighting and Brian T. Whitehill's sets effectively establish and maintain the show's charming B-movie feel, and Drew Fornarola's sound design punctuates the plot throughout with terrific goofy touches, although a song he's written for Mattie slows the action and feels out of place, perhaps because it is the only song in the show.

Given the oversold house during its first performance, and the audience's enthusiastic reception, *Devil Boys from Beyond* may be a downtown hit in the making and remain on Earth beyond the Fringe, but as of now that's just wishful thinking, so catch *Devil Boys* while you can. I guarantee you'll laugh your anal probe off.

Producer: MadCaP Productions

Author: Buddy Thomas

Director: Kenneth Elliott