

Review: Lab Theater's 'An Act of God' makes FL debut with lots of laughs, occasional wrath

Charles Runnells, The News-Press

Published 4:12 p.m. ET Nov. 21, 2017



(Photo: Special to The News-Press)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, God knows the Ten Commandments are a big hit in the Christian world. But you know what? He's kind of bored with Thou Shalt Not Steal and those other nine.

Ho-hum.

"I've grown *weary* of the Ten Commandments in the same way Don McLean has grown *weary* of 'American Pie,'" the Almighty says in Lab Theater's new comedy, "An Act of God." "I've written a lot of other laws. I'm not some one-list wonder!"

That's why God has a NEW set of Commandments for the 21st Century — a Ten Commandments 2.0.

Take, for example, this one: "Thou Shalt Not Tell Others Whom to Fornicate." God doesn't have a problem with who or what turns you on, it seems. Homosexuality isn't a sin — "You are ALL equally smite-able in my eyes," He explains — but here's one thing that IS a sin: Masturbation.

"Every time you do it," God says, "I have to watch!"

MORE: [Theater season in SWFL: Your guide to all the plays and musicals in 2017-2018 \(/story/entertainment/2017/08/03/theater-season-2017-2018-2017-theatre-play-musical-broadway-palm-florida-rep-barbara-mann-artis/525049001/\)](#)

And the laughs keep coming at Lab Theater, where "An Act of God" just made its Florida debut. The comedy continues through Dec. 9 at the downtown Fort Myers theater.



Lab Theater's "An Act of God" features actors (from left) Rob Green, Miguel Cintron and Dave Yudowitz. (Photo: Special to The News-Press)

Critics sang hosannas for playwright David Javerbaum's comedy when it appeared on Broadway, thanks largely to the two TV stars who played the role of God: Jim Parsons of "The Big Bang Theory" and later Sean Hayes of "Will & Grace."

To match that star power in Fort Myers, director Mitch Haley turned to reliable local funnyman Miguel Cintron, who's been making audiences laugh for years at Theatre Conspiracy, Strauss Theater, Florida Repertory Theater and elsewhere.

The result: A solid, irreverent comedy full of wit, strong performances and humor that hits the funnybone more often than it misses.

MORE: [Lab Theater buys building, plans future in growing downtown Fort Myers \(/story/news/2017/05/08/lab-theater-buys-building-plans-future-growing-downtown-fort-myers/101194726/\)](#)

For 75 minutes, Cintron oozes charm and good-humor — and, occasionally, some thundering, Old Testament-style wrath — as he chats with the audience in his gospel gown and sneakers, tells breezy stories about the Creation and testily answers questions about why He allows so much evil in the world ("You want to know why?" he barks when pressed for an answer. "I work in mysterious ways, OK?").

God is flanked by two archangels, Gabriel and Michael, in their sterling white suits and feathery wings. Dave Yudowitz's dotting, beatific Gabriel reads from the Bible on command and occasionally mixes God a martini. Meanwhile, Rob Green's Michael takes questions from the audience (sort of), but gets increasingly angry with the Supreme Being as he asks Him nagging questions about evolution, whom Cain and Abel married and why bad things happen to good people (God's answer: "To even out the good things that happen to bad people. *Duh!*")

Both actors turn in solid, funny performances. But make no mistake: This is Cintron's show, and the spotlight stays on him throughout this one-act comedy as he reveals one new Commandment after another, serenades the audience with a hilariously over-the-top pop number and even snatches a ringing phone from an audience member.

"That's what you get!" Cintron snarls. "You can get your phone after the show — or in Hell, which is where you're going now!" Amen to that (although I'm pretty sure the ringing phone is part of the script).

Cintron even makes a blacker-than-black Holocaust joke go down smoother than it probably should have. I howled with laughter — and then kinda hated myself afterward.

The actor is obviously having a great time with this one, and there are lots of laughs throughout the show. I just wish those laughs were a bit more consistent. Many lines hit their target, but others breeze by without making much of an impact. And I wish the pace was sometimes a bit brisker, too.

Still, if you want to laugh, this show will certainly do the trick. And Cintron more than lives up to God's description of him as a "handsome, talented, seasoned actor and beloved local celebrity."

No argument there.

But whatever you do, please make sure to turn off your cellphone. If you don't, you might be facing God's wrath and spending some time in a warmer climate — and I don't mean Southwest Florida.

Connect with this reporter: Charles Runnells (Facebook), @charlesrunnells (Twitter), @crunnells1 (Instagram)

If you go

What: "An Act of God"

When: Now through Dec. 9

Where: The Laboratory Theater of Florida, 1634 Woodford Ave., downtown Fort Myers

Tickets: \$23

Info: 218-0481 or laboratorytheaterflorida.com (<http://laboratorytheaterflorida.com>)

Read or Share this story: <http://newspr.es/2iEP2A2>

