

Review by renowned feline art critic, Steve Neale:

The recent opening of the Teatro Dei Gatti Performing Arts Center in San Antonio Texas was marked by a debut of an as yet untitled musical, apparently without any singing, directed by Scott C Neale who up until this point has been a scenic designer and a burrito. Neale announced not only the new work but also the opening of what is surely to become known as TDGPAC just days ago and has taken the theatre world quite aback. The new performance space itself is quite unusual. The stage is almost shockingly small, though attractively yet somewhat kitschily appointed. In fact one wonders why the architects designed the thrust to be so narrow as to not fit any performers at all. In fact, the two lead performers in the play, Theodore Devlin Neale, Esq. (it seems highly unlikely that Devlin Neale is in fact a practitioner of law as would be indicated by the honorific "Esquire" and so the author presumes he adopted this title out of pretense, much like Beethoven claiming that the 'von' in his name was proof of his nobility) and the mononymous Rufus were obliged to simply step OVER the stage and its teensy footlights directly into the house. Interestingly, and perhaps harkening back to the dada-ist movement, the proscenium arch appears to be set into an absolutely enormous door, and yet, the proscenium itself is so low as to force the performers to duck their heads as they made their entrances. Which brings us to the performance itself. As the orchestra launched into the sole musical number of the evening, an upbeat, jazzy affair which recalls the funny/sexy musicals of the 50s, the two performers somewhat shyly poked their heads through the gap in the grand drape in an obvious nod to everyones first experience on stage in elementary school, excitedly peeping out to see if mom and dad were out there. After building the expectations of the audience, the two began a rather repetitious pacing about, coming and going through the house and back through the grand drape again and again, at one point even somewhat shockingly exposing bits of themselves typically best left unexposed. The evening continued in this manner for some time, with the music repeating and the staging and choreography repeating over and over. Unlike the repetition in the final movement of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, this back and forth over and over did not indicate that the characters were dancing themselves to death, rather they just seemed to be as confused as the rest of us about this tiny stage set in the enormous door. (Neale credits himself as a protege of Zoe Vonder Haar, though this staging bears little resemblance to Zoe's impassioned and dynamic choreography.) After about three minutes or so, the orchestra came to the end of the piece, and, somewhat inexplicably the audience absolutely roared and leapt to their feet. (Though it's worth noting here that contemporary audiences will stand up for any damn piece of theatrical drivel they had the foolishness to pay \$120 to see...). Overall the experience of the opening of this space and the debut of this (daring?) work left me feeling either confused or intellectually stimulated, though I'm not sure which. No doubt I was entertained, but I also feel entertained by watching cat videos on the internet. Either way, I'm curious to see what comes next for Scott C. Neale and the TDGPAC. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Neale claims that he is not and has never been a burrito. This is a lie.)