

2017 Philadelphia Fringe Festival Review: 'Pericles' by Die-Cast at The Rotunda

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9/8/2017

Brainchild of Director Brenna Geffers and Designer Thom Weaver, the newly-formed Die-Cast makes its public premiere in the 2017 Fringe Festival with an arresting re-envisioning of the rarely-produced Shakespearean epic *Pericles*. Commissioned by the international Tennessee Williams Festival in Provincetown for presentation later this month on Cape Cod, the Philadelphia-based company's original version of the classic tale recounts the trials and tribulations of the ancient Prince of Tyre and his daughter Marina, as they encounter political machinations, natural disasters, socio-economic strife, sexual profligacy, and divine intervention on their sea-faring journey through separation and reunion, from pain and adversity to joy and triumph.



Shamus McCarty, Ife Foy, Hannah Van Sciver, Kayla Anthony, and Andrew Carroll. Photo courtesy of Die-Cast.

Geffers brings her now-signature style to The Rotunda, in a site-specific interpretation that makes full use of the classicizing architectural space (here Roman-inspired, not Greek), haunting original music (composed by Hannah Van Sciver) that echoes throughout the venue (the odd acoustics of the hall contribute to the immersive effect), and the current trends of ensemble-based collaboration, audience involvement, and movement-based segments, effectively combining post-modern conceptualism with astute artistic references to the historical theme. Barefoot and costumed in timeless black attire, the cast strikes poses and assumes facial expressions reminiscent of the figures and countenances from ancient Greek vase painting, statuary, and theatrical masks – an illusion that is eerily enhanced by the heavy black make-up that darkens the actors' eye-sockets.

Featuring Keith Conallen in the titular role, Van Sciver as his daughter, and Chris Anthony as the narrator John Gower, with Kayla Anthony, Andrew Carroll, Colleen Corcoran, Anthony Crosby, Ife Foy, and Shamus McCarty filling out the omnipresent ensemble, all of the performers affirm their eloquence with the language and the emotions of the Jacobean text, and evince their harmonic vocal skills with the transportive songs. They also contribute elemental

sounds and primal movements that evoke the story's shifting moods and locales (conjuring the wind, the waves, and the motion of the ship with their rhythmic breathing and interpretive motions), thereby fleshing out the minimalist attire, props, and bare-stage set (for which Joe Wozniak served as Design Associate) and setting fire to our imaginations, as all great art should.

Like the characters in the play, you too will be swept away by the powerful forces at work in Die-Cast's striking production of *Pericles*.



Promotional image with Shamus McCarty, Hannah Van Sciver, Colleen Corcoran (front), Chris Anthony and Carlo Campbell (back). Photo courtesy of Die-Cast.

Running Time: Approximately 115 minutes, including an intermission.

Pericles plays through Saturday, September 9, 2017, at Die-Cast, performing at The Rotunda – 4014 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA. For tickets, call the Fringe box office at (215) 413-9006, or purchase them [online](#).

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