

# P@NDORA (YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE)

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## *P@dora is Unflinching, Vital and Important Theatre for Young Audiences*



It is sadly rare to see people communicating with teenaged audiences about the gritty and too often taboo issues affecting their lives. [P@dora](#), now playing at [Young People's Theatre](#), is a refreshingly candid look at the affects of Internet porn on a young girl, aimed at audiences 15 and up.

As the audience entered, we were hit immediately by the sounds of static reverberating through the fog that enveloped the set. Through the haze, a clear rectangular box and scattered LED lights were all that could be seen on the [Young People's Theatre](#) stage.

The first action of the show was a monologue, the first of several, by the male half of the two person cast, Sean Colby. His clear and concise story telling, lit by the screen of an iPad amid the last wisps of mist, was a telling preface to 50 minutes of eerie confusion and disarming sincerity.

After the opening, the story shifts it's focus to Pandora, played by Bria McLaughlin. She starts out as an average high school girl with a crush on a fellow student: Alex, played by Colby. Her opening monologues include references to hating high school, being frozen by nervousness around her

crush, and her best girl friend, clearing identifying her as what many would consider the “average teenage girl”, or at least the type most portrayed in movies and TV.

After encountering a strange, faceless man in the bathroom at school who directs her towards a porn site, the real meat of P@ndora begins. I was surprised and impressed at the blunt candour used in a scene where Pandora describes her first experience of the porn on this particular website, and McLaughlin brought a mixture of sensuality, embarrassment and shock that perfectly suited the moment. I was especially pleased to see this scene written for a female character.

From there, P@ndora goes on to examine the pressures and additions that can result from teenagers being exposed to pornography, specifically via the Internet. While I applaud the subject matter and their willingness to take it head on, at times it was unclear whether they were warning or condemning. I would be wary of a show that discourages young people from exploring their sexuality completely, but understand and encourage the desire to make aware the dangers of porn, especially if it is a teen's sole exposure to sex. I hope the show can act as a warning not only to young people, but also to the adults that have the power to educate them in a safe and open way.

The actors did a respectable job of walking this fine line throughout the show, my only complaint being that, as is a danger with very small casts, the action began to seem repetitive at times. The script allowed for this as well, revisiting many of the same themes with repetitive language. Kudos must be given to the sound and lighting design, by Guillaume Levesque and Martin Sirois respectively, for breaking P@ndora up with decisive changes in the look and sound of the set. Certain scenes also did a good job of breaking the constant tension, including a refreshingly light scene between Colby and McLaughlin where their characters innocently flirted at a friend's party.

The story of P@ndora ends inconclusively, and spirals into confusion for both the characters and the audience. While I wish we had gotten a bit more closure, perhaps it enhances the point of the story that we did not.

While some will agree and some will disagree with the message of the show, and perhaps the fox mask was a bit much, I would strongly recommend P@ndora for young people and their parents or teachers. P@ndora takes on difficult subject matter unflinchingly, and I only hope that those who see it will make an effort to do so more often.

*Details:*

- P@dora is playing until December 11th at [Young People's Theatre \(165 Front Street East\)](#)
- Shows are at 10 30am or 12 45pm on weekdays, and at 2pm on weekends
- Tickets can be purchased [online](#) or via the Box Office (416 862 2222)

*Production photo by Robert Desroches*

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