

# REVIEW: DOMESTICATED

**DOMESTICATED ON STAGE AT THE BERKELEY STREET THEATRE IS FULL OF "STELLAR FEMALE PERFORMANCES"**



*Domesticated*, by Bruce Norris is currently getting its Canadian premiere thanks to The Company Theatre in partnership with Canadian Stage at The Berkeley Street Theatre. It's a slick, 160 minute play that zips by so smoothly that you barely notice the length. I give all parties involved huge credit for that.

It helps that Bruce Norris is a Pulitzer prize and Tony winning author. His script is a mix of brutal honesty cut with moments of levity, so expertly, you barely notice you were given reprieve from the heavy onslaught of text. I also appreciated immensely, being that I am a female actor, the abundance of strong, female roles that have been written into the script.

This play is chock full of stellar female performances some of whom play multiple roles. A huge amount of respect goes out to Maria Vaccratsis who runs the gamut on that one. She expertly and distinctly plays five very different characters of different status with such precision that sometimes it takes a minute to realize it is her. Akosua Amo-Adem has the audience laughing with her talk show host peppering in some key comedic moments. She also had a couple great zingers as the cop. Niki Lipman, the spitfire you can't miss, brought the scene stealing sass, wit, and comedic chops to all her scenes.

Martha Burns as Judy, who basically dominates the entire first act, is a force. I was transfixed by her performance. Every word that fell from her mouth felt like it came from the very fiber of her being. She is a woman trying to make sense out of her husband's infidelities while maintaining an incredible amount of strength, selecting her words meticulously as she tries to piece

together her thoughts. I was feeling along with her. I was reacting along with her. This is a huge credit to her as an actor. Holding us in her sphere of anguish, confusion, anger, resentment. Her role is so juicy and well written and she torpedoes it to another dimension. Truly a must see performance for all my fellow female actors.

Paul Gross, as Bill, goes through one heck of a roller coaster throughout this play. From emasculated, silenced, and skewered by every woman he encounters, paying the price for his infidelities, to an articulated powerhouse of emotion erupting in the second act with an epic monologue. His performance was effortless. The man remained an active listener the entire first act without saying a word and still managed to captivate.

In my opinion, one of the most poignant scenes in the play comes when Bill (Paul Gross) meets a transsexual in a bar, played expertly and hauntingly by Salvatore Antonio. For me, this scene was hugely pivotal in Bill's storyline and Salvatore nails the delicate balance of playing a character that can easily be overblown by stereotype. He kept it real and though his time on stage was brief, it was hard to forget. It is one that can appear seemingly light at first while subtly disturbing and disrupting you deeply.

Philip Riccio's direction moves the play along at a stealth pace, weaving the movement cleverly into the storyline where we don't even notice scene changes happening or the time slipping by.

There was also some use of projections throughout the play that had me and the rest of the audience in stitches. I don't want to give anything away but they

# MOONEY on theatre

By Tracey Beltrano  
Published November 20, 2015

Continued

were hilarious and only got funnier and funnier as the show progressed.

My guest and I really enjoyed this play and I could tell by the bustle afterwards that the audience did too. This play "may not be life-changing", as my guest had put it, but the writing is definitely clever. Also, this is the first time in 30 years that Paul Gross and Martha Burns have worked together on stage and their performances are a must see.

Domesticated clearly made an impact on us. We found ourselves talking about it for quite some time afterwards. To me, that is the mark of a successful show. Plus, the largely female cast is a triumph in my opinion. What a treat to see so many awesome women up there.

