

play Modern Mephistopheles
Giggling Iguana sells souls for
giggles, and Eclectic Circus shows how art
can destroy life

Theatre Inconnu opened its International Faust Fest last week with Giggling Iguana's simple and compelling production of *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. The play starts with a rather bizarre premise: a group of nuns have decided to stage *Faustus* as their annual theatrical endeavor. It's a fun concept (nuns performing a play about selling your soul? Come on, that's gold!), and once the sisters launch into the real play, you quickly forget their habits. With no set and very few props, the actors have only Marlowe's words to hold the audience's attention. And that they do, with a strong command of the rather difficult language displayed by all. In this site-specific production, the cast leads the audience through the church, performing in aisles, a side room, before the choir seating, and even outside. Their performances are enhanced by a live cellist and a few puppets that help with the more technically challenging scenes. Overall,

this production is just the right mix of passion and lightheartedness, and a great opportunity to enjoy the language of *Faustus*.

FaustFest

To May 8

St. John the Divine, 1611 Quadra

Little Fernwood, 1923 Fernwood

Tickets \$10-\$15 (or \$40 for all)

at Dark Horse Books or venues

Some events free

386-8736 or 360-0234

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Eclectic Circus has taken quite a different approach to *Faust*, with Mercedes Batiz-Benet's version, *Faust: Ignis Fatuus*, a modern retelling of the classic story that features Ms. Faust (Karen Lee Pickett), a painter struggling with her art. Her Mephistopheles is an agent (David MacPherson) who promises her everything if she will agree to be represented by his mysterious company. After a series of bizarre tests, she begins working on her masterpiece. The work slowly destroys her, and takes her new lover down as well.

Pickett and MacPherson have a forceful and disturbing chemistry as scholar and demon. They are accompanied by a useful chorus (Kate Humble, Amanda Lisman and Mike Klemak), who become spirits, doctors, pedestrians, bartenders, lovers, even revolving doors, as needed.

While the script has its kinks and wrinkles, director Tim Sutherland has put together a tight, energetic cast that carries the play through all its rough spots.

—Sarah Gignac

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