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THEATER REVIEW | 'LYRIC IS WAITING'

## A Doomed Romance Haunted by a Beast

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That the characters in “Lyric Is Waiting” include Bigfoot — yes, that Bigfoot — might lead you to expect slapstick, but this odd, effective play by Michael Puzzo is no comedy. It’s an unsettling dissection of a dysfunctional relationship, with a striking performance by Lori Prince as Lyric, the damaged woman at the center of it.



By Pepper

Lori Prince plays a troubled wife and the title role in Michael Puzzo’s “Lyric Is Waiting,” at the Irish Repertory Theater.

The play, presented by South Ark Stage and Kef Productions, is in the [Irish Repertory Theater](#)’s downstairs black box, a confining space that helps the audience feel the suffocating nature of the romance Mr. Puzzo explores. The tale is told by Ned (Brit Whittle), who is trying to reconstruct his courtship of and marriage to Lyric as he dreams it to have been, but a much less pleasant reality keeps intruding.

Lyric is hostile and brittle right from their initial meeting, so much so that you can’t imagine why any man would be attracted to her. But it soon becomes evident that Ned is a fixer, and she is his repair project. Trouble is, whenever she seems to improve, Ned breaks down: interdependence for all the wrong reasons.

Looming over this gathering storm is Bigfoot (Joe Masi, in a surprisingly delicate performance considering he’s a huge, hairy beast), a visitor from the dark forest of Lyric’s imagination. Ned has his own encounters, most notably with a smart-mouthed librarian (Kelly McAndrew) who seems to know what he’s looking for before he does.

Mr. Puzzo and the director, Adam Fitzgerald, keep the compact (75 minutes), fractured tale moving quickly and clearly, some early humor falling by the wayside as this once-promising relationship moves inexorably toward the trash bin of doomed love.

*“Lyric Is Waiting” continues through Aug. 22 at the Irish Repertory Theater, 132 West 22nd Street, Chelsea; (212) 727-2737, [kefproductions.com](#)*