

God comes to town to clarify some things

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By Florida Weekly Staff | on November 29, 2017



God (Miguel Cintron) in the center, with his archangels Gabriel (Rob Green) on the left and Michael (David Yudowitz) on the right. COURTESY PHOTO

Get thee up off thine ass and ride thy ass (or internal combustion engine vehicle) straight to the Laboratory Theater of Florida, where thou can taketh part in that holiest of activities: laughing.

You might even laugh your ass off.

“An Act of God” is the closest you’ll get to a private audience with the Almighty without dying.

If you lack a sense of humor, don’t bother showing up. Ditto if you worship a diety you believe doesn’t possess a sense of humor.

But if you believe that God himself invented humor and has given us richly all things to enjoy, then you should revel in the irreverent, naughty, take-no-prisoners “An Act of God.”

The premise of this one-act play is that God has taken over the body of local actor Miguel Cintron, in order to talk with us. And Mr. Cintron does a perfect job of playing ... well, Miguel Cintron.

As God explains, “In the Egyptian desert I appeared as a burning bush. Now ... I’m a short, chubby guy.” In other words, he says, charming, handsome local actor Miguel Cintron.

God wants to set a few things straight.



Sure, he handed down the 10 Commandments via Moses but, he says, he didn't intend for them to be the final, defining word. He's grown weary of them, he says, in the same way Don McLean has tired of singing "American Pie," which he's been performing since 1971.

"I'm not a one-list wonder," God protests.

And so he presents us with 10 more commandments, along with a few clarifications about stories in the Bible.

He's assisted by his two archangels, Gabriel (David Yudowitz) and Michael (Rob Green), or as he calls them, Gabe and Mike. The two are dressed completely in white: white suits, white shirts, white ties, white shoes, white wings. (Costumes by Jane Patterson and Joann Haley). The set (designed by Michael Eyth) is white on white: a white sofa center stage and white curtains on a white stage. A silver pulpit is stage right; if you told me it was the receptacle for the Olympic flame, I'd believe you.

God talks about everyone from Job to Steve Jobs. He also name-checks Neil deGrasse Tyson, "The Sixth Sense," "The Book of Mormon" and Kander and Ebb's "Cabaret."

But sometimes, he's a little too hip for the room.

He has a great line where he talks about creating the universe, comparing it to jazz. "It's all about the realities you don't create," he says. The night I was there, no one seemed to get the reference to the famous Miles Davis quote, "It's not the notes you play, it's the notes you don't play."

There were other clever lines, too, where I found myself the only one laughing.

This is the type of show where the more you know — the more pop culture references, the more theology — the funnier it is.

But it's still entertaining without that knowledge.

Playwright David Javerbaum won Emmys for his work as a writer for the original "The Daily Show." The play began as a series of Tweets (@TheTweetofGod) and then became a book, "The Last Testament: A Memoir of God."

Its comedy includes both rubber chickens and a banana peel. (No pies in the face though, unless you count the verbal ones.) It contains theological jokes, biblical jokes and more than one sexual joke.

(By the way, he'd like us to stop calling out his name during sex.)

God talks about creation ("Trees are stupid" but stars "are pretty") and reveals how he first created Adam and Steve, NOT Adam and Eve. Despite what some tell us, God is not a homophobe, and he wants us to know that.

A couple of throwaway lines were my favorite. When God's setting us straight about the flood and the ark, he briefly mentions "Noah and his wife Nameless." And when he talks about 1455 and the Gutenberg Bible, he refers to it as a time "back when literacy meant something."

While archangel Gabriel stays on stage with God, Michael pretends to take questions from the audience for God to answer. (Why do bad things happen to good people? How do we make sense of the Holocaust, of 9/11?)

Mr. Green's Michael is questioning and argumentative, while Mr. Yudowitz's Gabriel is a peacemaker, always trying to smooth things over.

Mr. Cintron has the lion's share of dialogue — it's virtually a one-man show — and does an incredible job. The night I saw it, though, he seemed to be rushing through his monologues (the 90-minute show ran only 70 minutes). He just needs to relax into his role and take a bit more time setting up some of the jokes. It can still be high energy with pauses in between some lines. I trust that will happen as the show continues and Mr. Cintron grows even more

comfortable with his role.

Then again, that's no easy thing, playing God.

But Mr. Cintron is charmingly breezy and irreverent.

Mitch Haley took over directing when a previous person stepped out. A comedic actor himself, his fingerprints can be seen all over this show.

Though the content is biblical, it's not for young children. And some believers might be offended.

But "An Act of God" is, ultimately, comforting.

After all, God loves us unreservedly and unconditionally. He has our back.

Sunday school was never like this.

Maybe it should've been. |

'An Act of God'

>> Who: Laboratory Theater of Florida

>> When: Through Dec. 9

>> Where: 1634 Woodford Ave., Fort Myers

>> Cost: \$23

>> Info: 218-0481 or www.laboratorytheaterflorida.com

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