

# Metropolis' 'Avenue Q': Not your grandmother's puppets

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Have you ever been to a show and at the end you weren't quite sure if the actors deserved a standing ovation? That isn't the case with "Avenue Q" now playing at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre. The cast deserved every bit of the thunderous applause from the on-their-feet capacity audience.

So what is "Avenue Q?" Imagine Jim Henson sitting down to write an episode of Sesame Street after a long night of drinking tequila, smoking lots of pot and watching an unhealthy amount of internet porn. That's the best way to describe "Avenue Q."

Like Sesame Street, which it endearingly spoofs, "Avenue Q" combines cute puppets with live people all living in the same housing development as they explore and

solve problems and search for their purpose in life through dialog and song. However, in this case they swear, investigate their sexuality and – of course – watch porn.

At the heart of the musical is a love story between person puppet Princeton and monster puppet Kate. Meanwhile, closet homosexual Republican investment broker Rod – fashioned after Sesame Street's Bert – struggles with his sexual identity and attraction to his straight roommate Nicky – obviously inspired by Bert's companion Ernie.

Supporting players include porn-addicted Trekkie Monster, building supervisor Gary Coleman (a fictionalized characterization of the former child star), Lucy the Slut, struggling comic Brian and his Asian-American fiancée Christmas Eve, school teacher Mrs. Thistlewat, and Care Bear-inspired Bad Idea Bears.

There is not a single weak performance in the mix.

As the central couple, Emilie Rose Danno and Alex Newkirk are a delight, with beautiful voices and endearing characters.

William Marquez is hilarious as the audience-favorite Trekkie Monster, while Josh Kemper and Aaron Lockman are a perfect pair as roommates Rod and Nicky.

Jordan DeBose, Emily Bailey and Aziza Macklin are laugh-out-loud funny as nonpuppet real people Brian, Christmas Eve and Gary Coleman, respectively.

The songs all feature catchy melodies and incredibly funny lyrics, aptly accentuated by creative choreography by Kristine Burdi and the expert puppetry of the actors. The puppets themselves were conceived and designed by Rick Lyon.

Don't let the puppets fool you. This is definitely not a kid's show. But, if you can get a baby sitter for the little ones, you are guaranteed a thoroughly entertaining night on the town.

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