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Theater

Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals: Everybody was... you know

 By Ed Huyck Tue., Oct. 15 2013 at 10:06 AM
 Categories: **Theater**

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Photo by Michal Daniel

Meghan Kreidler as Sika and Laura Anderson as Arahana.

As it turns out, the title *Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals* is a bit of a misnomer. The superpowered undead and the human flesh eaters don't actually face off in Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay's new play, which opened last week in a production by Mu Performing Arts.

Instead, in typical horror-story style, a band of human survivors battles the title groups in this dense work that sports plenty of high-flying and kinetic stage fighting and explores the never-ending ramifications of war.

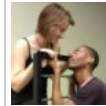
See also:
Zombies, Buddhism, cannibals, and the Secret War feature in new Mu play

The various parts of the piece don't quite gel, though the resulting production is largely

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entertaining and thought-provoking. An opening voiceover sets the scene: Solar flares kill off half of the human population, who in turn rise from the dead knowing kung fu. The World Health Organization has taken over in a world-wide coup and civilization is in flames.

We follow Sika (Meghan Kreidler), a Lao American who travels from Minnesota to Laos on a mission that eventually becomes clear. She has been trained by her tough-as-nails high school principal in the ways of the martial arts (why couldn't my high school principal have been this cool?), which serves her well after the apocalypse.

In Laos, Sika befriends a young orphan (Ayden Her) who has a secret that, if you look at the title of the play, is fairly obvious. Sika also connects with a pair of Buddhist monks and a woman, Arahan (Laura Anderson), who is haunted not just by the current end of the world but the ever-present effects of America's bombing of Laos during the Vietnam War.

Playwright Vongsay wraps all of this up in an exploration of Buddhist teachings, which provides part of the show's structure and plenty of extra philosophical fiber to chew on. All of these elements don't exactly play well together, but the generally solid work from the company, especially Kreidler as Sika, helps to pull it all together.

And if the play starts to drift, there's always a fight scene to break up the action. Choreographer Allen Malicsi creates a series of strong set pieces that build to the show's epic climax. It's aided by the work of DJ Kool Akiem, who is just the latest to bridge martial arts and hip-hop.

Director Randy Reyes also does a strong balancing act as each of the different elements in the work gets a chance in the spotlight. John Bueche's platform-based set is effectively used, serving as everything from the mountains of Laos to the burning streets of Minneapolis.

IF YOU GO:

Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals

Through Oct. 27

The Southern Theater

1420 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis

\$10-\$22

For tickets and information, call 612-340-1725 or visit [online](#).

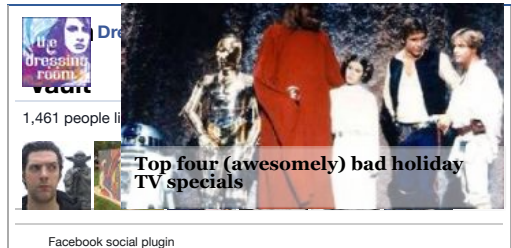
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