

REVIEW

Santaland Serves Up the Cynical Side of the Season, Nov. 19 - Dec. 3

By: Chad Young, *Nashville Parent*

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The Santaland Diaries (Ages 14 and older)

Tennessee Repertory Theatre

TPAC's Johnson Theater

505 Deaderick St., Nashville

782-4040 or tennesseerep.org

Show times: Mon - Thu 6:30 p.m., Fri 7:30 p.m., Sat 2:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$42.50

If you've ever wondered what it might be like to play the part of a Santa elf during the holiday season at a mall or department store, and you've got a great sense of tongue-in-cheek humor, then a trip to Tennessee Rep's The Santaland Diaries is a must!

This one-man show, starring the incredibly talented Matt Chiorini as the bitter, jaded Crumpet the Elf is 90 minutes of hilarious, side-splitting funny fodder.

The play is written by the amazing David Sedaris, and it's based on his actual experience as a Macy's elf some 20-plus years ago when he was a struggling actor in New York.

Sedaris' sardonic humor is at the forefront of Santaland, deftly directed by the great David Alford. What resonates is the reality of how the everyday job comes with its own frustrations and mortifications, in this case, snotty, brat children and the horrific parents who accompany them, expecting the moon and beyond from Santa and his elves, which drives Crumpet to booze up and smoke pot during his breaks in order to cope with his less-than-stellar existence.

There are tons of funny moments in the show, and Chiorini excels with his comic delivery all the way, especially when he breaks character and messes with audience members who show up late or possess any notable attribute worthy of a comedic poke, whether it's a hoodie-donning teen boy or a recent foot-surgery patient sitting in the front row with her extremity propped up on a bucket.

It's all in good fun, of course, and this show is GREAT FUN on all counts! With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season upon us, The Santaland Diaries is the perfect escape to laugh at the truly ridiculous nature of the commercial aspect of it all.