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Week 4 - Reviewed by Shelley Molad

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Week 4 of the EstroGenius Festival marks the last in this series of short plays. With five one-acts presented in less than two hours, this week packs a punch.

The evening begins with Melissa Maxwell's *Fetus Envy*, a courtroom drama in which a woman is accused of murder for terminating multiple pregnancies. Examining a prevalent social dilemma from an unbending angle, *Fetus Envy* produces an unsatisfying outcome. As it turns out, the defense attorney, played by Syngé Maher, is completely apathetic towards her defendant's case, and the prosecuting attorney, played by Charlie Fersko, is unforgiving, leaving little room for debate.

We are taken from courtroom to hospital for Pamela Danforth Yaco's *Family Time*, where Marie and her brother Vinnie visit their mother, who has fallen into a terminal coma. Vinnie's focus is skittish and disrupts the fluidity of the otherwise organic dialogue, from contemplating his mother's death to his inexplicable need, repeatedly noted, to leave. Luckily, Vinnie stays, and we experience an honest and intimate portrayal of two disparate siblings drawn together by their mother's impending death.

As Paul and Laura wrap up their dinner date, Laura notices that one of her shoes has gone missing. Turned off by Laura's unabashed plight for her shoe, Paul realizes that he and Laura are not meant for each other. Kristin McGovern's *For Want of a Shoe* is characteristic of a TV sitcom that's absent of comic beats. Actors Michael J. Connelly as Paul and Tina Chilip as Laura never make their relationship clear; what seems like a blind date proves otherwise. A redeeming moment occurs when Laura smacks down her high-heel in the center of the white tablecloth before marching off stage for an unforgettable exit.

Red Carpet may be the most enjoyable piece of the evening. It is a story that seems well known to playwright Kristina Romer—an aspiring actress serves as a movie star's escort to the Academy Awards in hopes of getting closer to achieving her dreams in Hollywood. Samuel Whitten comes across as a Brad Pitt look-alike; he is a confident, cool, and heady actor. During an impromptu lip-sync in the limousine, the entire theatre filled with laughter. The humor dies down when Alli Loeffert steps out of the car and refuses to give up her values for Hollywood, despite the harsh realities.

The evening concludes with Stacey Lane's *Rainbow Sprinkles*, a story about a high-strung woman named Miranda, played by Christine Bokhour, who screen tests a clown as a candidate entertainer for her son's tenth birthday party. After reviewing the class acts of Rainbow Sprinkles, delightfully portrayed by Jacqueling Kroschell, Miranda deems every activity inappropriate, politically incorrect, and/or offensive. When Rainbow Sprinkles refuses to change her entire act, Miranda is left alone with just a balloon; and in a fleeting, cherishable moment she reflects on her own childhood before abruptly popping it. Weaving in a common theme in this week's festival, *Rainbow Sprinkles* presents us with women unwilling to sacrifice their values and not afraid to voice them.