



As Fringe as it gets:
Rootless Tree and Greasy

Description

A one-act absurdist play and an LGBTQ take on Grease

By **Julia Ainsworth**

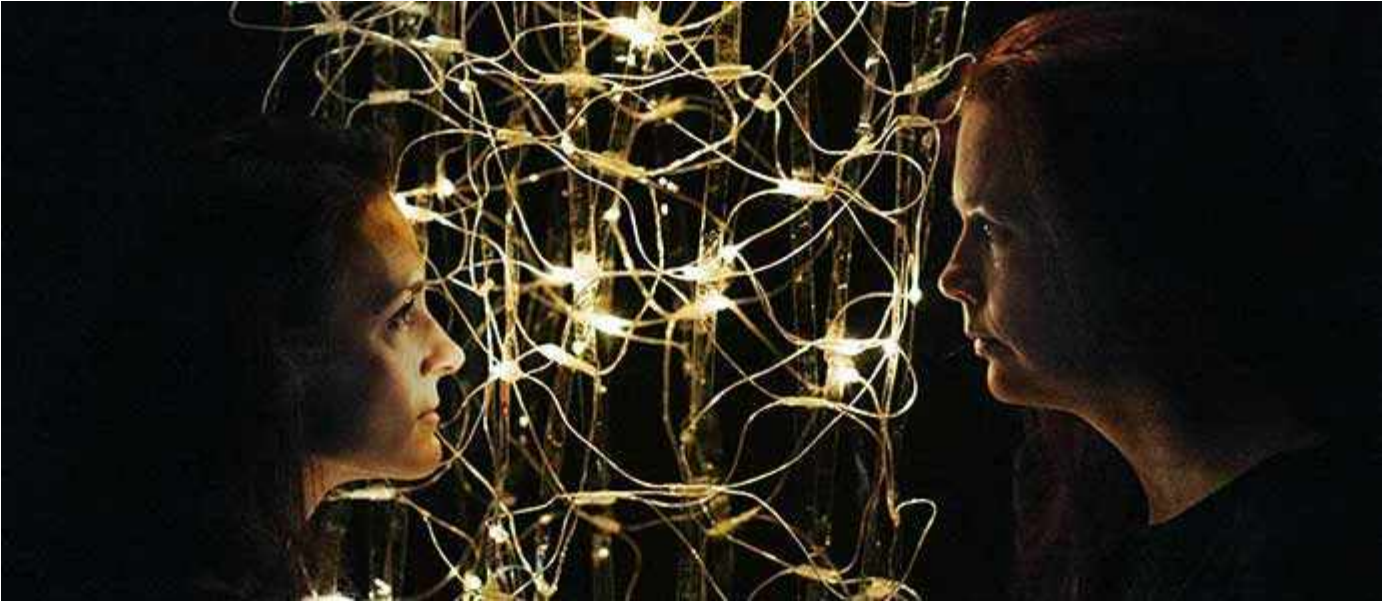
Rootless Tree – Twisted Tree Studios

This one-act absurdist play by American playwright **J P Livingston** makes its world premiere at the Freestanding Room. Direction by **Isabel Farias Lehoux** and featuring actors **Jen Viens**, **Rebecca Rowley** and **Julia Thomas**.

Two wives await their shared husband, suspended in time between anticipation and disappointment. A ticking clock underscores the building tension as the women cycle through their nightly ritual of domestic chores, bickering, storytelling and drinking.

Director Isabel Farioux Lehoux skilfully establishes the dysfunctional interdependency between the characters and highlights the absurdist tone of the dialogue.

The play hinges on the dynamic between the two wives and their conflicting desires. Norma (Jen Viens) relives her heyday of singing at the nightclub. June (Rebecca Rowley) obsesses over the pending results of her presidential campaign with the Women's Christian Temperance Movement. While competing for ownership of their husband, the wives find moments of levity and companionship in each other. The plot takes a turn when Fran (Julia Thomas), a mysterious figure, arrives home in the place of June and Norma's elusive husband.



Director Isabel Farioux Lehoux skilfully establishes the dysfunctional interdependency between the characters and highlights the absurdist tone of the dialogue. The configuration of the Freestanding Room creates a sense of enclosure. Jen Viens sets an impressive energetic pace as Norma while Rebecca Rowley brings a focus and sincerity to her performance that grounds the bizarre circumstances. The casting of Julia Thomas in the male role of Fran is slightly jarring at first, yet thematically thought-provoking.

Though the climax does not clarify the puzzling dramatic action, the audience is left to ponder questions about the nature of identity, intimacy and disillusionment. Does our ego blind us from truly ever knowing a partner?

An intriguing artistic investigation by an experienced team of local theatre artists.

Rootless Tree continues this week at the Freestanding Room (off venue) as part of the St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival.

Tickets: montrealfringe.ca/organizer/rootless-tree/

Greasy – Glam Glam Productions

Last year Glam Glam Productions' **Peter Pansexual** broke records as the highest grossing play in the history of the St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival and took home the Frankie award for "Spirit of the Fringe". Creative writing **McCarthy** return to the festival this year with another victorious





the original 1970's *Grease* that remixes the outdated high school romance narrative in a contemporary LGBTQ context.

British newcomer Winter Valentine (Sandy recreated) falls for Dani Foucault at Igloofest over the winter break. Winter is unimpressed by Dani's phoney bravado when she meets her again at Sacred Ladies of Unity Trinity high school. The Pink Tacos take Winter under their wing while Dani's Derby Dykes face off against the Fagettes from the school for boys in a drag race.

This highly entertaining production is inventive and unapologetically crude. The artistic team exploits every opportunity for an edgy joke and a striptease, expertly calibrated to the tastes of its audience. Cleverly deconstructs the 1978 film beat-by-beat with fresh commentary on heteronormative roles, consent and sexual identity.

'This highly entertaining production is inventive and unapologetically crude. The artistic team exploits every opportunity for an edgy joke and a striptease...'

A strong commitment by the dynamic ensemble and charming chemistry between **Magenta Haze** portraying Winter Valentine and **Phoenix Wood** as Dani Foucault. **Les Izmohr** and **Spoopy Patootie** are outstanding in their Drag Queen portrayals of Cha Cha and Ta Ta.

Sheer hilarity and raunchy goodness! For the open-minded viewer who can appreciate a dramatic musical ballad delivered in nipple tassels.

Playing at the Café Cleopatra.

Tickets: montrealfringe.ca/organizer/greasy-a-lesbian-love-story/

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Images: courtesy St. Ambroise Montreal Fringe Festival



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