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Desperately Seeking the Exit

by Daniel Scheffler  
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Peter Michael Marino in "Desperately Seeking The Exit" (Source: David Rodgers)

Bill Cosby has often been described as more than just a comedian. He's a true storyteller, a storyteller with impeccable timing and an interesting story to tell. Peter Michael Marino, who opened his **"Desperately Seeking The Exit"** this month unfortunately lacks that storyteller's ability to interest audiences.

Playwright Peter Michael Marino wrote a musical in 2007 that he based on the film "Desperately Seeking Susan" starring a glamorous '80s-era Madonna who cavorts around New York City with amnesia-ridden Roseanna Arquette.

The play was also called "Desperately Seeking Susan" and featured, incongruously, the music of Blondie, another blonde New Yorker. Originally planned with involvement from Madonna, Blondie and big producers, their interest dissipated quickly and the play went to the UK. Opening on London's West End, the show was closed a month later to scathing reviews.

The spawn, "Desperately Seeking The Exit," came from this moment of failure abroad as Marino decided to write a comedic piece that presents a behind-the-scenes expose of exactly how it all went right -- and then went all wrong. This includes losing a couple of

Marino travels down the road on which he had to flounder in London that features a director who doesn't know a thing, choreographers running amok, language misunderstandings, terrible reviews (with sometimes word for word recollections of reviews), criticism for the critics, bad timings all around, and predictably, drugs (without the rock and roll).

With some errors in delivery and some technical problems along the way, the production lacked a seriousness, or commitment, that a title borrowed from an iconic cult film starring Madonna should at least have.

Thrill, disillusion, darkness, more thrill and hatred usually make for great themes when it comes to storytelling. That is definitely the case if the storyteller has the gift to firstly tell the story in a way that audiences understand its humor, and secondly, if the storyteller is inclusive when it comes to the story.

"Desperately Seeking The Exit" felt neither tantalizing nor accessible and its fabulousness was lost somewhere in the basement of Triple Crown Restaurant & Ale House.

Peter Michael Marino has a high-energy set, which is always a credit when you basically have a microphone and a stool, but the tumultuous show feels more like forced humor than anything else. The content that had value included some differences between the English and the Yankees but wasn't well executed enough to have impact.

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"Desperately Seeking The Exit" ran through May 18 at Triple Crown Underground, 330 7th Ave at 28th Street. For more info, visit [www.SeekingTheExit.com](http://www.SeekingTheExit.com).

Daniel Scheffler is a writer who spends his time in New York, Cape Town and India. Follow him on Twitter @danielscheffler

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