

starry-eyed fever dreams are chronicled in the infectious "Bring the Future Faster," a pounding pop response to "Don't Rain on My Parade."

The time is the mid-to-late 1970s, when punk rock happens to be the music phenomenon of the moment in worlds-away London. Young Monica, a budding singer-lyricist, has a meet-cute encounter in the Glasgow home of Kreeger's Ian Wallace, who's reclusive, down on himself and handsome. (This is musical theater-land, after all.) Ian has a gift for melody and, stoked by Monica's ferocious need for attention, emerges from his shell -- and vodka-by-the-bottleful haze -- just enough to become her unreliable partner in a punk act called the Diabolicals, which will take them to more cosmopolitan locales.

Advertisement

Given the very familiar opposites-attract tensions in the story, Goodman and Gordon are wise to compress the banter wherever possible and let the band play on. (The five onstage musicians, conducted by Jenny Cartney, ably amplify the satisfying score.) And while there's an undeniable curiosity value to the exotic convergence of Jewishness and Scottishness, Monica is dialed up to a rather difficult-to-digest level of adorableness when we're introduced to her. That makes it a bit tougher to believe in a disaffected type such as Ian falling so hard so fast, or in the rapid

transition of Monica from Broadway aspirant to imitator of the Clash.

Goodman does provide a foundation early on for a mischievous streak in Monica: Her first collaboration with Ian is a song for a Glasgow bat mitzvah, and what they come up with -- "Scottish Jewish Princess" -- is cheekily inappropriate for the occasion.

The musical picks up speed after it lands Monica and Ian in London, and the composer gets to indulge his penchant for parody with the Diabolicals' surprise punk hit, "All I Want Is Everything." (You might lament that "Rooms" doesn't spend more time in an inspired evocation of this bygone period.) In the tradition of ladder-climbing showbiz stories, we move on to the next town, New York, and, of course, the inevitable romantic complications and anguishing forks in the road.

The intimacy of MetroStage's little theater seems just right for "Rooms," which falls somewhere between cabaret and conventional musical. Adam Koch's set consists almost entirely of a door on wheels, which the actors roll into place to denote the many public and private spaces in which "Rooms" plays out. It's a show that seems to revel in its portability and, as such, will no doubt find receptive houses elsewhere. (This production departs Alexandria in September for Geva Theatre in Rochester, N.Y.)

Diaz -- seen in these parts most recently in Signature Theatre's "Kiss of the Spider Woman" -- does an excellent job of bringing out the charm in what could be a bulldozer of a character, successfully taking Monica from youthful irascibility to a more womanly warmth.

As a result, the evening's climax raises the mandatory lump in the throat. Vocally, she is a supple match for the impressive Kreeger, who allows us to believe in Ian's passions and his weaknesses. Both are woven into his rendition of Ian's intense, cathartic anthem, "Fear of Flying."

All those assets, the production entertainingly puts on display -- along with a couple of pretty decent Scottish accents.

Rooms, music and lyrics by Paul Scott Goodman, book by Goodman and Miriam Gordon. Directed by Scott Schwartz. Music direction and orchestrations, Jesse Vargas; choreography, [Matt Williams](#); costumes, Alejo Vietti; lighting, Herrick Goldman; sound, Daniel Erdberg; dialect adviser, Doug Honorof. About 90 minutes. Through Sept. 7 at MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St., Alexandria. Call 800-494-8497 or visit <http://www.metrostage.org>.

More on washingtonpost.com

[NAMES & FACES](#)

[Energy Returns as Major Issue](#)

[It Will Be a Good Night](#)

[RECORDINGS Quick Spins](#)

» [Related Topics & Web Content](#)

People who read this also read ...

[SmarTrip Upgrades Pushed To 2010](#)

[Tale of Two Churches Reflects Split Over Slavery](#)

[Joel M. Lerner - A Lesson in 'Rainscaping': Building a Garden That Makes the Best Use of Water](#)

[Woman who killed husband gets custody of daughters](#)



Most Viewed Arts & Living Articles

[Of Human Bondage](#)

[Writer Dominick Dunne hospitalized in Las Vegas](#)

[Postcard from Tom: Portland, Maine](#)

[Energetic, if A Bit Ragged, NSO Opener Is All in Fun](#)

» [Top 35 Arts & Living Articles](#)

» [Most Popular on washingtonpost.com](#)

powered by Inform

© 2008 The Washington Post Company

Ads by Google

[Visit Alexandria, VA](#)

Find Hotels, Shopping & Dining Plus Maps, Events & Online Booking

VisitAlexandriaVA.com

[Alexandria Va Real Estate](#)

Browse Alexandria Va Real Estate View Photos, Pricing, & Much More.

www.Homes-Justlisted.com

[Alexandria, VA Apartments](#)

Newly updated apartment homes in a prime Arlington location.

www.LiveEatonSquare.com

[NEWS](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [OPINIONS](#) | [LOCAL](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [ARTS & LIVING](#) | [CITY GUIDE](#)

[JOBS](#) | [C/](#)

SEARCH:



washingtonpost.com



Web:

Results by Google™

Search

washingtonpost.com: [About Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Search Terms](#) | [Topics Index](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#) | [mywash](#)
 The Washington Post: [Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [PostPoints](#) | [Electronic Edition](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington](#)
 The Washington Post Company: [Information and Other Post Co. Websites](#)