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## STAGE REVIEW: 'An Act of God' at Bucks County Playhouse



By Anthony Stoeckert

David Javerbaum's "Act of God" is a light, comedic fantasy that portrays God as a lot of people wish he could be. This a God with a modern sensibility who rattles off jokes as if he's the host of a mild roast. How does explain evolution and geological evidence that the Earth is billions of years old? He planted the evidence, made it look that way—take that Neil deGrasse Pagan!

God also talks about his "wrath management issues" — and the Book of Job? It's funnier than "The Book of Mormon" and "The Book of Mormon."

"Act of God," running at the Bucks County Playhouse through June 16, offers thoughts from God, who has taken on the form of an actor named Harry Bouvy (who plays the character). And he has a whole new set of Ten Commandments for us. The old set needs an update, it seems.

A few commandments stay unchanged, but the edits include “Thou shalt not tell others whom to fornicate,” and by that? “I mean the gays,” God says. In fact, he did indeed originally envision Adam and Steve, a relationship that started with Adam knocked out cold (“I Cosbied his nectar,” God says). But the snake and the apple made Adam realize what was going on.

So if God is OK with homosexuality, how does he explain “thou shalt not lie with a man as one lies with a woman,” which is not a commandment but is found in Leviticus. Simple — that’s good advice: “When you’re with a man, you can straight-up lie, but if you’re lying to a woman, you need to be more subtle.”

“Act of God” made its Broadway debut in 2015 with Jim Parsons as God. It returned in 2016 starring Sean Hayes. It’s becoming a popular choice in regional theater (George Street Playhouse in New Brunswick staged it last year, with Kathleen Turner playing God), likely because it’s so simple to stage.

It also seems to be a show that draws stars — what celebrity wouldn’t want to play God? — but Bucks made a good move in avoiding stunt casting. The play informs us that God has taken on the form of this stage actor name Bouvy, who bears a resemblance to Stanley Tucci and who has been in a few episodes of “Law & Order.”

Dressed in a light-blue shirt, sky-colored tie complete with clouds, off-white pants and gold-painted sneakers, Bouvy plays the role with confidence (which comes in handy when playing the Almighty), humor and a touch of humanity.

This God is all-knowing, and he also knows about his own failings. The show hits home when God talks about Jesus. He starts off funny, Jesus was a middle child and acted like it, but after noting that his son died not only for our sins, but for the sins of his father, God commands us to honor our children.

This isn’t a one-man show, as God is joined by two archangels. Ashley D. Kelley is all charm as Michael, who peppers God with some annoying questions. Joe Kinosian plays Gabriel, and also the keyboard (Kinosian also is billed as vocal arranger), and sets the mood for God throughout the show. He’s more of a cheerleader for God, but also knows when he’s going too far. Kinosian has been at Bucks before, in “Murder for Two: Holiday Edition” and in “The Nerd,” and he’s terrific, as always.

The set is simple, a platform with a denim-blue couch and screen projection. Director Tracy Brigden sets a brisk pace (the show runs less than 90 minutes), and brings a good dose of heart to the show.

"An Act of God" isn't deep. I can't say it's a laugh riot, but I chuckled, often.

*"Act of God" continues at Bucks County Playhouse, 70 S. Main St., New Hope, through June 16. For tickets and information, go to [bcptheater.org](http://bcptheater.org) or call 215-862-2121.*