

backstage

Reviews

The Cinnamon Moths

By [Elias Stimac](#) | Posted Oct. 27, 2004, midnight

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Presented by Britpack Theatre at Urban Stages, 259 W. 30 St., NYC, Sept. 25-Oct. 16.

What is most striking about the stage drama "The Cinnamon Moths"—being presented by Britpack Theatre—is how much it seems like a movie. From the detailed set of Nicolas Locke to the dusky lighting by Joshua P. Hinden and jolting sound effects by Sylvia Mincewicz, the visual and audio elements are stunning, to say the least. These three designers combine their efforts to create a stark atmosphere pulsing with blinding flashes and haunting shrieks.

Co-written by Michael Harris and David Kantounas, the plot brings together a group of survivors who have escaped catastrophic circumstances and meet underground to plan their next move. They piece together clues after encountering an odd time-traveling room, and then anticipate the arrival of a friend whom they regard as their savior. Unfortunately, when he does arrive, he reveals that he doesn't have the answers they are looking for.

The ensemble works together to build the tension of the situation under the studied direction of M. Stuart Wallace. While the pacing lags a bit in the middle, the opening and closing sequences effectively convey a sense of urgency. Combined with the visual effects, "The Cinnamon Moths" plays out like an action thriller on stage. Unfortunately, the lack of an explanation as to what caused all the chaos in the first place is a bit too ambiguous to provide a satisfying payoff.

Performance levels vary, with Gwenfair Vaughan setting the tone for the evening with her focused, emotional portrayal. Jonathan Landsberg is a strong presence as Abbas, the long-awaited comrade who is supposed to lead them to safety. Desi Joseph, Kate Moran, and Ralph Bogard provide some lighthearted relief with their quirky characterizations.