

jo ledingham THEATRE REVIEWS



Us & Everything We Own



*Adam Lolacher and Julie McIsaac
Credit: Emily Cooper*

**At PAL
Studio
Theatre until
April 13**
brownpapertickets.com

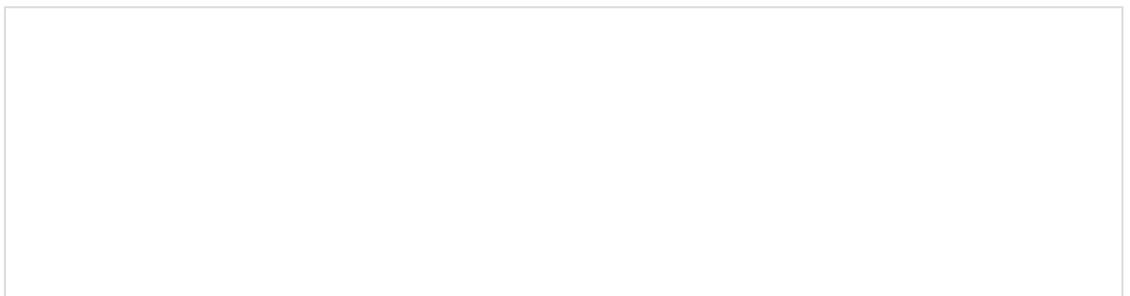
*Posted on
April 6, 2013*

Home
ownership is
The Canadian
Dream that

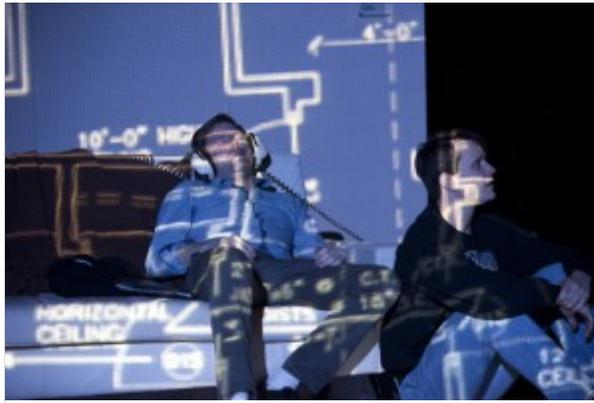
has turned into a nightmare. Who but millionaires can afford to buy houses in our world-class city? How many twenty-somethings – underemployed and with student loans to pay off – can get a down payment together? Answer: ones with rich parents.

Rachel (Julie McIsaac) has rich parents that are willing to set her and her boyfriend Charlie (Adam Lolacher) up in a condo but a) she doesn't like the condo they've chosen and b) she doesn't want to take their money. She wants to feel grown up. Charlie, making peanuts working as a barista after failing at a couple of businesses, is okay with taking the offered condo because it will free up money he and Rachel have been saving. She wants to buy the condo of her dreams – one with a solarium and, no doubt, hardwood floors, stainless steel appliances and a walk-in closet; he wants the money to start a restaurant with his coffee bar colleague Erin (Genevieve Fleming.) Trouble in paradise.

Eager as a
puppy dog to
please is
Rachel's
brother
Simon



(Jason Clift) who has no problem at all taking money from his folks. Heck, if it makes them happy, why not?



Adam Lolacher and Jason Clift

Credit: Emily Cooper

This is real 'slice of life' theatre. It's

straight up, cut the poetry, tell the story like it is. Forget flashbacks, dream sequences, flights of fancy. It could be TV; it could be film. But it really speaks to the issues confronting twenty and thirty-somethings in an entertaining and meaningful way.

A couple of years ago [Twenty Something Theatre](#), under the artistic direction of Sabrina Evertt, produced *Prodigals*, the first play by Sean Minogue; the issue there was young adults getting out of small town Canada and moving on into the larger world. In *Us & Everything We Own*, this young theatre company and Minogue look at young urban adults as they grapple with getting a home and getting ahead.

Craig Alfredson's set is a fine example of how resources and space can be used effectively: one set serves all. The white leather couch in the parents' home turns into an rather ordinary couch with the addition of a blanket and a couple of cushions in Rachel and Charlie's place. A bookshelf rotates and becomes the menu board in the coffee bar; another partial house interior wall turns into a restaurant divider. The changes are all done efficiently so director Evertt can keep things moving along quickly.



Genevieve Fleming, Adam Lolacher and Jason Clift

Credit: Emily Cooper

Minogue's dialogue is hip and illustrates how well he knows this demographic. In a discussion about coffee, for example, Simon waxes on about the quality of

various beans and cautions Charlie about watching out for the acidity in beans from Ecuador.

(Typically, Charlie wants to start a restaurant but, although a barista, he hasn't given any thought to the coffee he'll be serving.)

Erin's obsession over "deep red and creamy white" as a possible colour scheme and Rachel's delight over a walk-in closet attests to the relevance of Minogue's title: *Us & Everything We Own*. It's all about 'Us' and the importance of everything we own being 'cool'.

I think, however, that *US & Everything We Own* takes a significant turn fairly early and becomes a discussion about ambition: who has it, who doesn't and what does class have to do with it? Rachel is a go-getter in dove grey leather ankle-high boots and a chic, slouchy blue-grey sweater. McIsaac, a little firecracker on stage, gives Rachel all the confidence that money and a good haircut can buy. Charlie, on the other hand, is very casually dressed with his shirttails out. Lolacher makes Charlie, son of a laid back cabbie, 'nicer' than Rachel but probably bound for failure; Charlie dreams big but is bad on follow-through. Simon has no ambition at all but will continue to take money from his parents until they die and then he'll share all their money with Rachel. No problemo. Clift brings some fine goofball chops to this role. And Erin is ambitious to the point of nastiness. Fleming does a great job of this manipulative blond with the perfectly coiffed hair and horn-rimmed glasses.

To condo or not to condo is eventually, not the whole question. Do the families that Rachel and Charlie come from inevitably set their course? Playwright Minogue suggests *Everything We Own* isn't worth the pain and heartache it causes *Us*. Pretty darn smart for a guy who's only thirty-two.



Genevieve Fleming and Julie McIsaac
Credit: Emily Cooper

« [Assassins](#)

[The Life Game](#) »