



# STAGE RAW

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Menu

HOME   REVIEWS   FEATURES   THEATER AWARDS   CITIZEN RAW   EVENT LISTINGS   DIGITAL PLAY FESTIVAL   ABOUT US

## REVIEWS



Christian Levatino, Anna Khaja, and Jan Munroe in Guy Zimmerman's 'THE ROYAL' (Photo by Alex Hoffman)



### THE ROYAL

Reviewed by Vanessa Cate  
Padua Lab and The MET Theatre  
Through February 21

RECOMMENDED

LA's Largest  
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Guy Zimmerman's *THE ROYAL* is an unflinching example of *Padua Playwrights*' established aesthetic. For decades the writing workshop has taken an intellectual, non-careerist approach, focusing on the playwright rather than the actor. Actually performing a new play in front of an audience is considered simply the final stage in the writing process.

Much of the script's potency is due to information slowly and deliberately unraveling before our eyes. Many mysteries are presented. First, we have to ask: Who is the woman on stage, tied to a chair, a black sack obscuring her face? (Anna Khaja is under there). She wears a name tag — "Anna" — and a waitress's ensemble. What does Morgan (Jan Munroe) want? An aging muscleman as charismatic as he is threatening, how far is he willing to go to get it? And what does the pool boy Alex (Christian Levantino) know? What connects him to the others and brings them into this claustrophobic room where they are bound together until the end?

A struggle emerges for power, information, and reconciliation. However, it is not the resolution of the plot that is most satisfying. The script is one part thriller, one part forensic procedural. What is most successful is the poetry in the words. The script might also be considered an exploration of the blueprint and structure of these genres themselves.

The co-direction by Guy Zimmerman and Gabriel Griego is simple, but allows for textured performances and for the words to shine through as the true stars of the show. A focused and graceful expression emerges.

***Padua Lab at The Great Scott Theatre @ The MET, 1089 N. Oxford Ave., Los Angeles; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun. 7 p.m. through Feb. 21. <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2493581>. Running time: 75 minutes with no intermission.***



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This is a rectangular advertisement with a white background. At the top right corner, there is a small blue play button icon. The main text reads "The Doctor's Office. Reinvented." followed by the website "www.onemedical.com". In the bottom right corner, there is a "Learn more" link. At the very bottom, it says "Beverly Hills | Santa Monica".



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