

AVENUE Q  
Music and Lyrics by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx  
Book by Jeff Whitty  
Broadway Across America  
Chrysler Hall  
Jan. 27--Feb. 1, 2009  
For tickets: (757)671-8100

Hello, I'm Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large.

Although it's been around for over five years and won various awards, this was my first exposure to "Avenue Q". In this respect my wife and I were definitely in the minority. One felt that most of the youngish audience knew the music and lyrics by heart. If they hadn't seen the show, they had listened to recordings or picked it up on You Tube.

It's for the generation who grew up on Sesame Street. The kiddy problems are now adult issues for the 30 somethings. To prove it, there's lots of sophomoric naughtiness about sex and such as puppets and humans deal humorously with serious topics like racism and Schadenfreude. Video screens drop in to tell you what that word means in case you don't know.

The puppets and their handlers are indeed quite clever. The puppeteers are in plain view and they react with each other and their puppets. These are not your every day bundles of furry delight. They are worn on the arms of the actors and often function as their alter egos. Somebody remarked that these smutty little guys are for people over 12 and under 40. There is a disclaimer in the back of the program freeing the Jim Henson Company and the Sesame Workshop from any association with the show

The title refers to a street in some far out borough of New York City where rents are cheap and the neighbors friendly. A young man, Princeton, and his puppet Rob, played with high energy and skill by Robert McClure move into an apartment. Princeton bemoans the fact that his newly acquired B.A. Degree in English is useless. He quickly gets to know his neighbors who include Christmas Eve (the winning Sala Iwamatsu) and Kate Monster (the dynamic Anika Larsen) who falls for Princeton and wants to open a "Monsterssori" School. They are surrounded by a most likable bunch of off the wall birds and a lot happens. There are events like a Jewish wedding, people coming out of the closet, Lucy the Slut, Miss Piggy in a Mae West sort of way, losing her head etc. They are a very talented troupe of players.

There are lots of funny moments in the X-rated puppet show that's "full frontal" at times but we really don't see much. My only real problem with the evening was the sound. It was so loud that the lyrics were lost and distorted. Expensive equipment poorly used. Other production values were first rate.

Perhaps I should disclose the fact that I am over 40.

This is Edgar Loessin with Loessin at Large and I'll see you at the next opening.