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# the Stranger

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## On Stage

BY ADRIAN RYAN

### H. P. Lovecraft: Arkham

Open Circle Theater  
Through Nov 12.

I thought *Arkham* was swell, and indeed this review will probably be a positive one. (It's true!) But it's peculiar how often the first 10 minutes (or so) of any show can suck the dick that is donkey (so to speak) and then bam! It gets tons better. Indeed, I was pleasantly surprised: I had the screwdriver poised and ready to plunge into my eyeball when I suddenly succumbed to the dark and campy whimsy (yes, I said whimsy) of this very smart and scary and funny little triad of H. P. Lovecraft adaptations. Soon eyeballs were exploding (not mine—onstage) and pretty girls were screaming, evil fish people were having group sex (with the screaming pretty girls, mostly), fog machines were being pushed to the utter limits of their fogginess, and one or two unlucky folks suddenly liquefied. So suck up the sucky first 10 minutes: It gets good. I swear.

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Nothing evokes Halloweenishness like some good H. P. Lovecraft. Since there is no such thing as good H. P. Lovecraft, we must rely upon clever adaptations. Open Circle Theater traditionally offers a handful of these around this time every year, and this year's offering, *Arkham*, is smartly directed by Ron Sandhal. *Arkham* comprises three lightly reworked and creatively staged Lovecraft classics entitled "The Shunned House," "Cool Air," and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth." Two of these were very entertaining. There were one or two rusty links in the ensemble chain (and they should weep from the stink of their clunky, stale



**H.P. LOVECRAFT** Fogginess, evil fish sex & exploding eyeballs.

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performances!), but Open Circle has its spooky technicals down cold—the set and lights and special effects are extra-specially spooky. Horror fans shouldn't miss it, and non-horror fans probably shouldn't, either. It's almost Halloween, for Christ's sake! ADRIAN RYAN



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