



Non-Equity The Musical!

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reviewed by [Kristin Skye Hoffmann](#) · August 11, 2012

Non-Equity The Musical! seems to have been a long time in the making. It was born of endless frustrations from its star and creator, Danielle Trzcinski. She was just too close to getting her big break too many times and the result is the play.

This show is for actors and the “civilians” who are curious about the day-to-day lifestyle aspiring performers experience. It explores the individual frustrations of a handful of Non-Equity actors while they audition for general EPAs (Equity Principle Auditions), Summer Stock Companies, Tours and Cruise Ship shows. What we find is that the challenges are in essence the same at each. The vicious cycle that keeps the lowly Non-Equity actor down goes like this. You cannot get into an Equity show unless you are an Equity actor, and you can't be an Equity actor unless you qualify for your Equity card. You can't get your Equity card unless you are in an Equity show. There are some opportunities for getting a foot in the door but this requires waking up at 5am to be the first to get on “the list” that the AEA auditioners may or may not dip into on any given day.

They also struggle with being type-cast, being forced to act in roles they aren't interested in, the way they are treated like peasants at the AEA building (not even being allowed to use the bathroom while they wait all day since they don't have their cards yet), the imbalance of available female actors and male ones (two girls sing a duet about how life would be much easier if they possessed a penis) and on and on. Although there is a genuine effort to stay positive the story borders on being exhaustingly whiney and I frequently found myself thinking to myself, “Wow. If you all hate all of this so much, you should probably stop.” Still numbers like, “Living My Dream” help yank them back from the edge.

Trzcinski and Director Christian Amato have assembled quite a talented cast of performers. The ensemble as a whole seems to be having a blast showing off their chops and there are certainly some stand-outs. Lindsay Morgan as the brassy and irresponsible party girl, Felicity, shines. She has a beautiful voice and I always looked forward to her solos. Emily Swan in the role of The Monitor is funny and easy to watch. She plays a variety of different Monitors and various auditions. Nichole Turner as Beonika has excellent comic timing and is a no-nonsense diva. As the classically trained African American opera singer who is only ever offered servant and maid roles she tells it like it is. The running gag of the mispronunciation of her name never disappointed. Trzcinski herself as the endlessly sweet Wendy has a lovely voice and great sense of humor and she certainly deserves a showcase of her talents such as this.

As an off Broadway Producer in this great city, I would have liked to see that point of view explored as well as the experience of actors who actually have their cards. Instead we witness the vicious cycle that, in the 1 hour 40 minute run time, really does get overly repetitive. A little editing on the book might be in order. I also thought the play was going to end two or three times before it actually did.

Still, Trzcinski's play is a funny take on an honorable mission. The system is flawed and should be reexamined. This may not be something that will happen any time soon, but raising awareness about the system certainly couldn't hurt. If you are looking for a funny inside look on the most frustrating parts of being an actor in NYC performed by an enthusiastic ensemble of gifted performers, Non-Equity The Musical! is for you.