
A Gift for Planet BX63

By [Quinton Skinner](#)

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It's lonely out in space, as Bernie Taupin once noted, and in the intergalactic fairy tale *A Gift for Planet BX63*, a young girl (Jennifer Ilse) pines for some sense of fulfillment on her lonely planet. The scene is set by the Universe (Elena Gianetti), who lays out a story of isolation in rhyming couplets. Writer (and former City Pages theater critic) Max Sparber lays out a lyrical tone from the outset, and when Ilse begins gathering stardust from a meteor to craft shining crystals, we wade directly into allegorical territory. Ilse performs her own choreography inside an open wooden box, executing athletic handstands that lend both a sense of yearning and a nifty simulation of zero gravity. Lest things become too weighted with symbolism, though, we're soon treated to the arrival of a Salesman (Paul Herwig). Herwig lays down a clattering walkway from his offstage spaceship, and arrives in a garish suit with a big box of wares (he also indulges some goofy clowning, as his character tries to adjust to a change in gravity and calibrate what is presumably his universal translator doohickey). Sparber's rhymes take a turn for the Seussian when the Salesman begins hawking his exotic product line, but Ilse's character has eyes only for a little flower in a pot. In due course, she begins exchanging the beautiful things she has made for plant food, and the Salesman locks the girl into the slippery slope of consumer addiction—in one of her only lines of the night, Ilse stares into the distance and pleads, "More!" It's no great surprise where things go from here, but Herwig's scenic design (a low-budget mini solar system here, stacks of crap plant food there) combines winningly with Ilse's movement and Sparber's silliness to create a work of genuine heartache. And lest one walk out on a bummer, there's a nice visual note at the end to suggest that all is not necessarily lost. At just under an hour, it's tempting to regard this show as a trifle, but surrendering to its skewed charms feels like a pleasant daydream that hints at something important on the fuzzy periphery of consciousness.

Off-Leash Area; at Our Garage through November 10 612.724.7372
