





ghost! We could get a rapper!” Lucy’s disdain for John’s first draft is intense. “This is a Mel Gibson movie!”

Mark Bringelson directs *Above The Line* with the same flair he showed in his crackerjack work on Rubin’s previous comedy *Bitch*, as well as a pair of superb Road Theatre productions, *Bunbury* and *The Friendly Hour*. He keeps the action moving fast and furious, Victoria Profitt’s snazzy multi-location set allowing lickety-split movie-like dissolves and jump cuts from scene to scene.

Performances are spot-on. Dowse is a delectably dry and deliciously imperious studio exec.

Stuart does terrific work as a man attempting to balance a movie deal and a March-August romance all the while attempting to emerge from under his mother’s shadow. Marsden is girl-next-door perfection as a naïve young thing who may not be quite as innocent as she appears. Calhoun radiates charisma and shows off first-rate physical comedy chops, whether finding new ways to slouch sideways on an office chair or rolling up in a ball on the floor (following the Susan Boyle comment). 6’5” Mannell once again proves himself a star in the making with his dynamic work as a screenwriter who’s gone over to the Hollywood dark side.

Profitt’s ingenious set fits all of *Above The Line*’s many scene locales into the Bootleg’s fortunately wide, deep stage area, all the while looking like a million bucks. Jeremy Pivnick’s lighting is his usual brilliant best, translating those movie dissolves and jump-cuts into stage terms. Robert Prior’s costumes could not be better chosen to fit each character’s personality and style. John Zalewski’s sound design, too, couldn’t be better, with a particularly fine (and often dryly ironic) choice of background tunes. Michael J. Beahm serves as production stage manager.

A standout design/concept element is Adam Soch’s cinematography. Yes, cinematography! The play opens with spy cams (projected on a large screen above the set) showing Lucy’s arrival at Supreme Studios, moving from foyer to hallway to office before entering live on stage in the same outfit. Act Two opens with a scene between Jeremy and Christian (and Jeremy’s mother’s back) which takes place entirely

on pre-shot high-def video, an inspired choice for a play about the movies.

A recent column by Steven Leigh Morris in the LA Weekly bemoaned the conspicuous lack of plays about Hollywood in Hollywood. Rubin's *Above The Line* certainly helps to fill this gap. I loved every fly-on-the-Hollywood-wall moment of it.