

PUT ITS SUCCESS DOWN TO A MONSTROUS love, because that's what finally wins you over in *Godzilla*. Yasuhiko Ohashi's play is about romance between the big saurian guy with the destructive tail and the blowtorch breath and the innocent -- and much smaller -- Yayoi, the woman who adores him despite numerous familial roadblocks. Though Ohashi's play leaps from parody to sincere emotion to social satire as rapidly as the large lizard knocks over hydro lines, director Jim Millan's production has enough laugh-out-loud comedy to entertain, even if your only knowledge of *Godzilla* is a movie poster.

It wouldn't work as successfully if John O'Callaghan's Irish-accented *Godzilla* -- dressed like a lounge lizard, of course, and holding his hands a bit like claws -- weren't so charming and disarmingly shy as he learns that a little pain is necessary for true love. With equal skill, Melinda Deines never makes you gag on Yayoi's sweetness in this *Beauty And The Beast* rewrite. The real tenderness between the two anchors the show's comedy.

The surrounding cast also have fun, notably Jean Yoon as Yayoi's demanding grandmother, who's also dallied with other species; Paul Sun-Hyung Lee as *Godzilla*'s half-brother Mothra, an over-the-hill monster who questions the future of *Godzilla*'s love; and Isabel Zatti as both Mothra's wife Pigmon -- she wins the best-dressed-monster award, 1958 -- and an intrusive reality-TV reporter.

The show has some problems. The stylistic shifts are sometimes awkward, the writing (or maybe the translation) can be choppy, the final scene's rushed. But this *Godzilla*, presented on Sherri Hay's wonderful stylized set that includes a gushing volcano, roars onstage with comic energy. 🤖