

# British Theatre Guide

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## Hospital 2008: Episode One

Conceived, written, and produced by Axis Theatre Company

Axis Theatre Company

New York City

(2008)

Review by Rachel Lynn Brody

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Publicity image

*Our former Edinburgh reviewer, Rachel Lynn Brody, has moved back to the United States and is now giving us the occasional taste of US theatre.*

What a strange and lovely presentation is the first segment of 2008's *Hospital* offering. Although tuning in at this point feels a bit like coming late to the party, the fact is that Axis Theater Company's story of three men trapped in an underground tunnel is a highly pleasing piece of absurdity.

This being said, aside from a few references to doctors it is unclear to me (a newcomer to the series) how the events on stage are related, as they are meant to be, to the inner mental happenings of a man in a terminal coma. It's also hard to tell how crucial an understanding of this is to the appreciation of the story.

While I figure this out - hopefully soon - I can say with confidence that this is a very talented group of performers; scenes in a hospital (located on the tundra, where no eskimo will ever stay) are so wonderfully steeped in free-association that one can just laugh, and enjoy the Dark-Place-Worthy hamming up of soap-operatic-hospital-show style. David Crabb, Laurie Kilmartin, Paul JoeFuer, and especially Paul Marc Barnes (as the "English specialist") are both delightful and chilling; later, as the queen of hearts, white rabbit, and mad hatter, Britt Genelin, George Demas, and Edgar Oliver are equally entertaining while setting up a far more sinister expectation.

If there is one flaw with episode one, it's that too much of the first section of this year's story feels needlessly repetitive. Whether this is because the actors have yet to find the changes in meaning in the text yet, or because it's meant to symbolize something to do with a coma state is hard to say at this point in the game.

Hopefully, though, it's a question which will be answered by the next three episodes.