

ARTS & LETTERS

THEATER

Attendant Concerns

By HELEN SHAW

Bathrooms are all things to all women. They can be sanctuaries, conference rooms, make-shift dressing rooms, drug dens, and self-esteem torture chambers. It's a special relationship, and it's different every time. In the Wreckio Ensemble's group-devised "Wrestling Porcelain," a lonely bathroom attendant rules over one such bathroom, witnessing the women who have the luxury to come and go—always leaving her with a mess to clean up.

Cecy (Dechelle Damien) has been squeezing soap and spritzing perfume on ungrateful women for 30 years. Day in, day out, she provides a sweet optimism to the women who weep on her shoulder, as breezily as in a garden made of toilets. Beneath her sweet exterior, though, lurks melancholy and frustration. Symbolically, one mysterious stall-door always remains locked to her. A strange woman exits from it, but no one ever seems to enter. The demonic door leads to privilege and wealth, and as much as Cecy hammers at it, it never lets her in. The other three women in the ensemble, Randi Berry, Michelle Diaz, and Karly Maurer, act out the bevy of basket cases that rush in and out of Cecy's domain. Flexible and observant, they create compulsive hand-washers, transvestites, and Russian battleaxes with equal sass.

A piece built out of character studies would fall apart, however, if it weren't for Ms. Damien's Cecy. A hilarious creation, she waddles around in her suspenders and perplexed Cuban accent and yet manages to be completely grave in her search for justice. With abundant physical humor and a generous social idea at its core, the Wreckio Ensemble proves itself more than a flush in the pan.

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