

Review: MONSTERS OF THE AMERICAN CINEMA at Urbanite

The production runs through December 7th

By: Jacob Ruscoe Nov. 06, 2025



Urbanite Theatre launches its 12th season with a powerful, deeply human production of Christian St. Croix's *Monsters of the American Cinema*, a play that blends coming-of-age drama, grief, humor, and the glowing nostalgia of classic monster movies. Running through December 7th, this two-hander unfolds inside the cramped interior of a camper—an unconventional but fitting home for a makeshift family struggling to figure out how to care for one another. Under the sure-handed direction of Summer Wallace, the production becomes a stirring meditation on parenthood, identity, and the monsters—both real and imagined—that shape us.

The story centers on Remy (Jon Gentry), a widowed gay man who inherits guardianship of his late husband's teenage son, Pup (Tyler Gevas), after a sudden tragedy. Remy, who never imagined himself a parent, now finds himself navigating late-night anxieties, adolescent mood swings, and the unanswered questions Pup carries about his father and their fractured past. The play uses the structure of a nighttime confession: Pup has been involved in a troubling racist incident at school, and Remy—torn between anger, confusion, and fierce love—must coax the truth out of him piece by piece. What unfolds is a painful and tender excavation of grief, masculinity, and the fear of becoming a monster in someone else's eyes.

Jon Gentry gives a beautifully modulated performance as Remy. He balances humor and heartbreak with equal finesse, grounding the show with a warm emotional steadiness. There's a quiet ache in the way he moves around the camper, tidying and rearranging as if order might keep chaos away. Gentry captures the duality of Remy's role: the man who desperately wants to do right by Pup and the man terrified that love might not be enough. His emotional restraint never reads as distance; instead, it becomes one of the play's most moving through-lines, the portrait of an adult improvising parenthood on the fly.

Across from him, Tyler Gevas—an impressive local Sarasota talent—delivers a performance charged with raw, unguarded passion. As Pup, Gevas tackles a difficult role layered with bravado, vulnerability, and teenage volatility. He shifts between swagger and fear with remarkable fluidity, especially in the storytelling sequences where he reenacts the monster movies he used to watch with his father. Gevas pours intense energy into these scenes, revealing the character's longing for guidance and connection beneath the bravado. His performance is both deeply felt and refreshingly honest.

The chemistry between Gentry and Gevas is the beating heart of the production. Their exchanges feel lived-in, shaped by frustration, affection, and the unspoken bond of two people who need each other even when they can't yet fully say so. Some of their shared scenes have emotional tension, while others display a quiet tenderness, like the moments when they reminisce about their shared love of old movie monsters. Their dynamic is complicated, messy, and completely believable—exactly what the play demands.

Jeff Weber's scenic design contributes significantly to that authenticity. The interior of the camper is rendered with an eye for detail: cramped bunks, cluttered countertops, a small leading to the shower, for some comedic moments. It is both a home and a trap, a place where emotions bounce off tight walls. David Covach's costuming choices are simple but sharply attuned to character—Remy's slightly rumpled comfort wear contrasts with Pup's bolder, youthful style, and both reflect the characters' emotional landscapes without ever drawing undue attention.

If there is a small critique to be made, it's that a few emotional shifts—particularly in moments where the characters move from anger to confession—feel slightly abrupt. These transitions are challenging for any two-actor play, and while they occasionally register as rushed, they never diminish the overall strength of the performances or the clarity of the storytelling.

Director Summer Wallace brings the entire piece together with confidence and empathy. Her direction honors the text's humor while allowing the heavier themes space to resonate. She guides the actors through the script's emotional shifts with a sure sense of pacing, creating a production that feels intimate, urgent, and ultimately hopeful.

Monsters of the American Cinema is a fantastic start to Urbanite Theatre's

12th season—a moving, resonant story brought to life with exceptional

performances and thoughtful design. Audiences looking for theatre that

challenges, comforts, and lingers long after the story ends should make

their way to Urbanite before December 7th. This is a show well worth

witnessing.

Tickets and more information can be found at:

www.urbanitetheatre.com/monsters

Photographer Credit: Sorcha Augustine