

THEATRE IS EASY

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Here I Sit, Brokenhearted: A Bathroom Odyssey

Written and Directed by Seth Panitch

Off Off Broadway, Musical

Runs through 7.10.16

Theatre Row's Beckett Theatre, 410 West 42nd Street

by *Shoshana Roberts (whoware.php)* on 7.3.16



Chip Persons, Ian Anderson, Matt Lewis, and Seth Panitch in *Here I Sit Brokenhearted*. Photo by Porfirio Solorzano.

BOTTOM LINE: Breasts, poop, penises, and other topics normally found written about on bathroom walls are comedically sung about by four talented actors.

Here I Sit, Broken Hearted... There they sat, singing about feces. There I sat, quite amused. Writer and director Seth Panitch has most definitely been inspired by watching *Blazing Saddles* and *Robin Hood: Men in Tights*—I felt like I was sitting seeing a mock-Mel Brooks movie (just with slightly less of a plot).

With a public bathroom-looking set, there is graffiti all over the tiled walls and four stalls. From limericks to drawings of tits the audience is taken on a journey through an array of vulgar humor. The set is quite funny with drawings like “Shit Pickle,” thoughtful statements such as “Anniversaries are like toilets, men usually manage to miss them,” and poems like

Roses are tits / Violets are tits / I love tits / Tits, tits, tits

The four Celebrants—Ian Anderson, Matt Lewis, Seth Panitch, and Chip Persons—play an assortment of characters who croon to us. They do this not only with generic musical theatre singing, but with raps and barbershop quartet style as well. Having rewritten lyrics to some recognizable songs, like “Shall We Dance” from *The King & I*, the entire hour is meant to be humorous. Even their deep-meaning contemplations end in a punchline. What I enjoyed most was the relevance of topics they incorporated. Yes, they payed homage to tried and true poop jokes, but they also incorporated topics such as: transgender bathroom discussions; being gay; penis size; The Munich Conference with Hitler, Stalin, and Winston Churchill; current politics with Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton; race; religion; and breasts.

With reenactments of the final Casablanca scene with a man in a gigantic inflated penis costume and men with oversized pillow boobs, the show is clearly raunchy, but fun. It is the Celebrants who make it that way though. They are clearly experienced performers, as highlighted when Person's penis costume was only partially inflated during their kick line. He naturally went into utilizing the deflated balls as a skirt, which he swished back and forth and let influence his entire demeanor for the better. He had a saggy scrotum and he ran with it (literally and figuratively).

I was worried my friend who accompanied me wouldn't like hearing about the subject matter, since she doesn't talk about poop on a regular basis like I do, but even she was able to enjoy the show with only the occasional uncomfortable reaction when the subject matter came around to white privilege and racial topics. To be honest, I myself felt awkward on occasion, but there is generally a fine line present with comedians' humor and political correctness that is a gray area being teetered on. With lots of profanity and raunchy behavior this is not a show for kids, but most certainly for those who grew up listening to Kinky Friedman like I did.

(Here I Sit, Brokenhearted: A Bathroom Odyssey plays at Samuel Beckett Theatre at Theatre Row, 410 West 42nd Street, through July 10, 2016. The running time is one hour with no intermission. Performances are Wednesdays at 8; Thursdays at 8; Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8; and Sundays at 3. Tickets are \$19.25 and are available at **telecharge.com** (<https://www.telecharge.com/Off-Broadway/Here-I-Sit/Overview>) or by calling 212-239-6200.)

***Here I Sit, Brokenhearted: A Bathroom Odyssey* is written and directed by Seth Panitch. Music is composed by R. Johnson Hall. Vocal arrangements/orchestrations are by Raphael Crystal. Choreography is by Tara Lynn Steele. Set and Lighting Design is by Mike Morin. General Manager is Dominic M. Yeager. Costume Designer is Tiffany Yeager. Stage Manager/Co-Director is Tom Alsip.**

The cast is Ian Anderson, Matt Lewis, Seth Panitch, and Chip Persons.