

That said, the rest of the cast is also fine; as are the costumes, the stage design, and pretty much any other element you can think of.

This production is actually more mainstream than *Fringe*. At core, it's about Emily's loss of innocence, as she learns that trust is a precious gift that shouldn't be lightly given or taken; and also learns that people are both worse and better than expected.

In other words, it's simply great theatre.

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6. **The Portable Dorothy Parker**

theportabledorothyparker.com

Rating: ****



Dorothy Parker is renowned as a sharp-tongued wit. Her wealth of concise and hilarious observations are perfect for a "best of" collection, which is what leads an editor from Viking Press to visit her residential Manhattan hotel room in 1943 to select what will appear in a book titled *The Portable Dorothy Parker*.

Of course, the scenario also provides a perfect excuse for this one-woman show to share Parker's finest bon mots.

This is actually the second time a FringeNYC show has focused on Dottie. The first was in 2008 and titled *That Dorothy Parker* (for my review, please click [here](#)). In fact, I almost didn't see this new production because I was worried about being bored.

Happily, it turns out I was an idiot to have any such doubts. Not only does Parker's material hold up brilliantly to repetition, writer Annie Lux breathes new life into it by surrounding Parker's words with copious anecdotes about the luminaries of her day—

Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Lillian Hellman, and many more—based on in-depth research. For example, this story is told about Parker foe Clare Boothe Luce:

One afternoon Clare and I arrive at the Algonquin Hotel at the same time...She gestured to me, oh so graciously. As I started towards the door, she said, "Age before beauty."

Well, I sailed past her and said, "Pearls before swine."

Someone once defended Clare to me, saying "She's kind to her inferiors."

"Kind to her inferiors?" I said. "Tell me, where does she find them?"

I hate the rich. You want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people He gave it to.

Even when an old chestnut is included, Lux takes care to give it a new spin by adding information you probably never knew:

"Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses."

Isn't that the worst goddamn drivel? I hate it. I hate that people love it. It's not a poem, it's barely a ditty. And I certainly don't want it to be the thing I'm best remembered for after I'm dead.

On the other hand, it might get the spectacle manufacturers all riled up again. Oh yes, those nine little words made sales of eyeglasses drop twenty percent!

All this is delivered with a relentlessly straight face and impeccable timing by actress Margot Avery, who is as fine a Dorothy Parker as anyone might hope for.

The work of artists such as Lux & Avery will help ensure that Dorothy Parker is remembered for far more than a joke about glasses.

This is the finest one-person show I've had the pleasure of discovering at the festival. Don't miss it.

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7. The Report

thereporttheplay.com

