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Waiting for My Man: Addiction in a Beckettian Ghetto

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Craig Alan Edwards, Patrick Holder and Sharita Hunt in *Waiting for My Man*. Photo: Carol Rosegg

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In Tony DiMurro's brisk and adrenaline-pumped *Waiting for My Man*, audiences are plunged into the *No Exit*-like and futile world of heroin addiction. Sometimes lyric and poetic, sometimes angry and street smart, "Waiting" won't be for everyone, but does offer a fascinating, existential look into three people's lives.

The play gets underway when Maria, a homeless woman dressed in turban and colorful rags (costume designer Kitty Leech's most powerful statement) comes onto Troy Hourie's graffiti-covered, under-the-elevated street corner of a set. She carries a lawn chair and proceeds to set up "home" next to a trashcan that she rummages through for treasure and drink.

As she looks and after she's found what she needs, Maria delivers a lengthy poetic monologue that decries the evils of wall streets and the danger of the spoon and needle. As delivered by Sharita Hunt, DiMurro's writing has a strangely hypnotic quality to it.

While Maria's battling with and berating the her world and issuing her warnings, she does not see the figure of a young man laying in the street, covered with newspapers. After Maria has left, this figure comes to life (sort of). Actually this young man, Tic, sort of staggers back into existence, his legs functioning more like rubber-bands than human appendages.

Before he can get his bearings, Slim has burst onto the street and the two begin the cat-and-mouse game that forms the center of DiMurro's play. One never is quite sure who Slim is. The fact that this wiry, frenetic and menacing presence (all traits that are provided with brio by Craig Alan Edwards) knows so much about Tic lends some credence to his claims that he knew Tic's brother. At the same time, there is something other-worldly about this man's presence. For those who believe in characters as symbols, Slim might be a personification of Tic's disease. For those who lean more toward the religious, Slim might be an agent of some higher power and the street corner, a purgatory to which Tic has been conscripted.

It doesn't matter. Edwards and Patrick Holder (who plays Tic with the cunning need and manipulative nature of a long-time addict) have terrific chemistry and the two deliver DiMurro's dialogue engagingly. Even when DiMurro's script lapses into melodrama, the two men, under Anthony Patellis' shrewd direction, manage to infuse the work with vitality. Also notable is Patellis' use of the various levels in the realistic environment. The director's stage pictures nicely underscore and enhance changes in the men's relationship and their struggle to survive.

Josh Bradford's colorfully murky lighting design and Cecil Averett's bombastic soundscape for DiMurro's world both add immeasurably to the intrigue and menace found in *Waiting for My Man*.