

British Theatre Guide

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Finer Noble Gases

Adam Rapp

The Bongo Club

6–26 August 2006



Finer Noble Gases is rather like TV series *The Young Ones* multiplied to the power of 10. That means that those who are easily offended should steer well clear of the Bongo Club. Potentially, even some visitors who think that they are unshockable might have their delusions shattered by a piece that has to be categorised as Theatre of Excess.

The play takes place in a living room peopled by four large, bearded members of a band the name of which they can no longer remember.

Their lives are hardly civilised although they do have three bowls on the coffee table. Rather than crisps, peanuts and olives, though, these contain potent red, yellow and blue pills respectively.

The discussions led by Robert Beitzel's Staples and Paul Sparks' Chase are monosyllabic and unintelligible for the most part and behaviour varies from eccentric to obscene.

For no obvious reason, Lynch, played by Michael Chernus, puts his foot through the TV and Ray Rizzo as The Man on the Floor urinates at inordinate length to the audible surprise of many audience members. When Chase then vomits behind the sofa, this seems like normal behaviour and hardly causes a stir.

The plot becomes better directed as the band invite neighbour Gray (Connor Barrett) to visit so that they can steal his TV. He is a nerdy banker who is seduced by the values of the flatmates, offers them his TV, which goes the same way as their own, and decides to stay.

The finale is a five minute rock set, showcasing a six-piece band at the grungy end of hard rock led by playwright Adam Rapp and featuring no fewer than five loud guitars. The egalitarian anarchy dissipates a little as fans can buy Lesstheband's CD after the show.

You will never see another play like this and may not wish to. However, Rapp is an exciting and adventurous playwright who has won a number of awards in the States. If you have the courage to try something completely different and intermittently very funny, or hanker after an American version of *The Young Ones*, brave *Finer Noble Gases* - but don't take the parents.

Reviewer: [Philip Fisher](#)