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## Heisenberg

by Winnie McCroy  
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Denis Arndt and Mary-Louise Parker (Source:Simon Stephens)

Drama Desk Award winner Mark Brokaw directs Mary-Louise Parker and Denis Arndt in a spirited two-hander, "Heisenberg," running for six weeks at New York City Center.

In a crowded London train station, Georgie (Parker) plants a kiss on the neck of a much older man, Alex (Arndt). The play opens in media res, post-kiss, and we see a frenetic, frazzled American woman explaining to a white-haired gentleman that she mistook him for her husband. Except her husband is dead. Except there was no husband, we later learn.

Nicely streamlined at 80 minutes, the play is the handiwork of two-time Olivier Award winner Simon Stephens. Parker, of "Weeds" fame, does a fabulous job, and Arndt does even

better.

Parker plays a sort of muddled, frantic amateur grifter, who makes a play for an older gentleman with the aim of getting him to give her a large sum of money to fly to New Jersey and search for her grown son, who has left her in search of his "North American heritage" and has vowed never to return. She curses a lot, and is unabashed as she compliments his long, strong hands and his deep blue eyes.

Arndt's character is a "wily old fox" who's a butcher in an age when everyone buys their meat at the supermarket. He's a codger who loves to dance the tango. And when Georgie visits his butcher shop, he admits to her, oddly, that he loves knives, and the way they take animals apart by the seams. It's a ghastly concept, but somehow, he makes it endearing.

"I promise to buy a surprising amount of meat next time," she promises in parting. But she is the one who is on the knives' edge.



Despite their dramatic age difference -- he is 75-years-old, and she is in her late 40s - she propositions him frankly, and he readily accepts. He tells her about the sister who died as a child, but whom he still talks to regularly. He tells her about the daily diary entries he makes, 50 words a day exactly, for the past 67 years. He says he loves her.

She waits until he is sleeping, then reads 67 years worth of his diaries. Instead of apologizing, she reproaches him for the lackluster content, including the burning flame he has nursed for his teenage sweetheart, saying, "It's not that good. It was like reading the entire century." Then she hits him up for \$1500£.

After the obligatory fight scene, he does indeed give her a fat stack of cash. At her insistence, he relents and

joins her in the U.S., showing his whimsy by purchasing the denim jacket he's always wanted to wear.

In the end, we don't ever know if she ever finds her son. And although she asks Alex to be her boyfriend and he says no, we see that the two will end up together, after a fashion. I suppose that is the uncertainty to which the title refers. At any rate, it's a fine resolution to a May-December romance.

Scenic design by Mark Wendland is limited to two tables, two chairs, some pillows and a handbag. Michael Krass gives his best 'en mufti' regarding the costumes, and Donald Holder and David Van Tiegham handle lighting and sound design, respectively.

If you're a fan of these actors, or just someone given to the whimsy this odd pairing so successfully pulls off, head uptown and catch "Heisenberg."

"Heisenberg" runs through June 28 at New York City Center at The Studio, 131 W. 55th St., in New York. For information or tickets, call 212-581-1212 or visit [www.nycitycenter.org](http://www.nycitycenter.org)

Winnie McCroy is the Women on the EDGE Editor, HIV/Health Editor, and Assistant Entertainment Editor for EDGE Media Network, handling all women's news, HIV health stories and theater reviews throughout the U.S. She has contributed to other publications, including The Village Voice, Gay City News, Chelsea Now and The Advocate, and lives in Brooklyn, New York, where she writes about local restaurants in her food blog, <http://brooklyniscookin.blogspot.com/>

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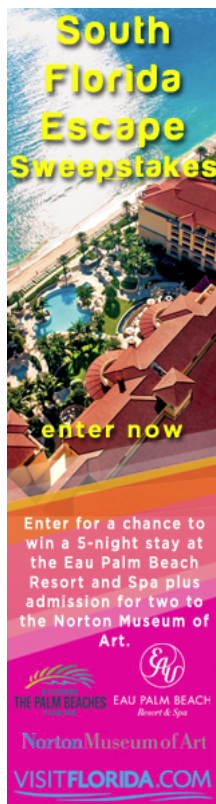
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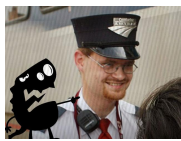
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