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0 Around the Coyote and Oregon Trail the Musical



Paul Dailing

Wednesday, Jun 3, 2009 - Reads

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The girl was cute, perky in that way that's enchanting on stage but could just drive you insane with five minutes of real-life contact.

And we were all singing about having malaria.

"I have malaaaaariiiiiiaaaaaa!" she sang.

"You have malaaaaariiiiiiaaaaaa!" we in the audience crooned back.

Goddamn, I love this artsy shit.

I was at the opening night party for [Around the Coyote's](#) yearly spring festival. People milled about, ate cheese and drank free [Peroni](#) while musicians and actors put on shows in a gallery space in the middle of a working lumberyard.

With all apologies to my friend Anne, who arranged for my press pass, I didn't get a chance to write about the event over the weekend, when it could have actually gotten a few people to the shows that make up the festival. The festival wrapped on Sunday, May 31, so this article is too late. I'm sorry. I was moving.

Although [Around the Coyote](#) has been around for 20 years (founded by Jim Happy-Delpech, whose name I think is awesome), it was always centered on the Flatiron Building at the six-corners of Damen, North and Milwaukee. This year, it moved a few blocks south, taking its home in the L. Miller and Son Lumber Co. on Division.

But onto why we were all singing about malaria.

One of the performers in the cement and brick gallery space, which Anne said had been filled with lumber just a few days earlier, was a young woman putting on a one-woman version of her play, a musical based on Oregon Trail.

That's [Oregon Trail](#), the 1980s educational video game, not the actual Oregon trail. A musical based on the game where the goal is to cross the nation without dying of dysentery.

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Yes. Every last one of them was.

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Treasures, Paul Dailing?

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Missed your charming contributions, Paul Dailing. What's in store?

02.00/

Considered and rejected.

Considered a more **02/**

conventional holiday celebration, Paul?

Links fixed. **01/**

01.00/

I hope that's not a Sarah Palin reference, because the only comparisons...

Gone rogue, Paul Dailing? **01/**



The show suffered for the shattershot performance by the girl and loudness of the mingled art fans (sometimes you couldn't hear a damn thing), but the performer's enthusiasm was contagious. She danced and whirled, sometimes forgetting her lines and sometimes talking so fast it was all a blur, but you had a sense whatever you were missing was hilarious.

The small selection of pieces adorning the walls was very good, selected for diverse style and subject as well as for quality. I would like to have seen more of them, but that means the pieces worked well as a teaser, giving a taste of what I would see if I came back again and again.

The opening night crowd ranged from gray-hairs to a little four-year-old girl who kept dancing, but most attendees hit the early to mid 20s range. Some wore scraggle-clothes, others fine dresses.

It would be easy and inaccurate to make fun of the crowd here. Artsy fartsy snobs, right? All looking at spraypainted Hello Kitty dolls or toilets or something and talking about how it's a statement on the nature of the womb, right?

It wasn't like that at all. These were sincere people who sincerely enjoy art. Artsy? Yes. Fartsy? No, although I was having some problems after the cheese and Italian beer.

I specifically put it at the end so people would read the full article and not just click away, never returning, but yes, I did find [a place to play Oregon Trail online](#). Tell Matt the General Store owner I say hello.

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Paul Dailing

Paul Dailing (pictured standing in front of the [World's Largest Boot](#)), now has a different haircut. He's also lost a bit of weight since that picture was taken, but not as much as he likes to think.

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