



New York Theatre Wiresm

Theatre Dance Performance Art Music
Alternative and International Theatre

Larry Littany Litt

THE BAT

"The Bat" by Krisztina Toth
Translated by Szilvi Naray
Directed by Ildiko Nemeth
Produced by New Stage Theater Company
36 West 106th Street, NY, NY
Reviewed March 20, 2026 by Larry Littany Litt



Sarah Lemp and Adam Boncz. Photograph by Nonoka Sipos Judit.

Watching an unhappy, frustrated character go down the tunnel of madness is a harrowing human experience. "The Bat" is a drama of the close shave kind. It is an examination of a life destined by the forces of love and misunderstanding to end sadly.

I was reminded of 1950s Bette Davis movies when screenwriters described the lives of women in terrible peril. They did not know it but the people around them were showing signs that Bette could not get through this film without internal collapse.

In "The Bat," playwright Toth reports she is telling a Hungarian story. Krisztina Toth and director Ildiko Nemeth are both natives of that challenging country. The nation looks beautiful and strong on the outside. Ah, but once our drama starts digging for a soul, what will we find? I found it to be a universal representation of where our bureaucratic society has gone wrong.

So it is with Eva, an ever hopeful, but recently faltering actress with a troubled six year old boy and an estranged partner. Not to mention a mother who seems like she created the acronym mother hate from her first ever so soothing false words to unhealthy accusations. A unending mother-daughter psychological war with the supposed goal of childcare and happiness.

In an inventive staging, the two actors assume a variety of characters. Actor Sarah Lemp plays the misunderstood Eva as a woman with a touch of Central European paranoia that she cannot overcome. Lemp also plays her son's playschool teacher whose provocative conversations are meant to demean Eva's role as a mother.

Eva's ex-partner is a mild mannered, well known lawyer trying to balance shared child care with his career and a neurotic ex. Hungarian-American Actor Adam Boncz heroically holds together a difficult contemporary life. But in a reversal of major calamity, the exes shall meet in dynamic tension.

Director Ildiko Nemeth leads this pair of well matched actors and their antagonists through high moments of dramatic lives. Will Eva ever calm down or will she have the nervous breakdown we all expect? Nemeth uses simple abstract sets with Mondrianesque lines and minimal projected graphics to afford the actors a place to come alive. After all the whining and banality comes an explosion of dramatic substance and meaning. A shivering climax and denouement.

This is a must see, well made play that will remind you that none of us are what we seem.

Off Broadway at its best.



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