

The Pornographer's Daughter

Z Below

Jan. 17–Feb. 16

Liberty Bradford Mitchell's life would probably have been eventful enough if her father Artie Mitchell (of Mitchell Brothers O'Farrell Theatre fame) had only opened a trailblazing strip club and porno theatre that made one of the first full-length skin flicks. The fact that he was also murdered, and by the other Mitchell brother, Jim, and that, ironically, Liberty's testimony was key to reducing Jim's sentence from murder to voluntary manslaughter means her story is just too good not to be told. This almost-solo show (she's accompanied by local rock band the Fluffers) begins with her parents' meeting in the '60s, proceeds through her childhood—when, unsurprisingly, she saw a lot that she shouldn't have seen—and continues through the trial to the present day. Mitchell doesn't see her show as an act of revenge but rather as an as-objective-as-possible presentation of a story and an industry that are too often simplified. Visit zspace.org. —Lily Janiak

Liberty Bradford Mitchell in *The Pornographer's Daughter*. Photo: David Allen



LILY'S OTHER PICKS:

Fierce Play

Ragged Wing Ensemble

Jan. 17–19

Oakland's Ragged Wing Ensemble is all about challenging itself to find new ways of making work. Seeds of its shows have come from text, song, movement or images, and the company develops and rehearses pieces in different kinds of locales. For this performance series, the company adds the variable of time. Core ensemble members have just 14 days to create and perform pieces. All stem from the company's season theme, "Just Ripe," which asks what it means to achieve a "juicy state of ripeness"—a question that will have all the more immediacy in the series' own condensed ripening. Visit raggedwing.org.

Escanaba in da Moonlight

TheatreFirst

Feb. 6–Mar. 8

Jeff Daniels might be best known as costar of *Dumb and Dumber*, but he also founded a theatre company, the Purple Rose, in his native Chelsea, Michigan, site of the premiere

of his comedy. It's set in the state's even more remote Upper Peninsula, or the U.P., whose denizens, called "Yoopers," are stereotyped as hicks made relatively wholesome. Their card game is euchre; their whiskey is made of maple sap. Their men, to be fair, are deer hunters, except for the hapless "Buckless Yooper," the unsteady shot on a quest to right his aim and his reputation. Visit theatrefirst.com.

A Maze

Just Theater and Shotgun Players

Feb. 14–Mar. 9

Rob Handel's play, now in a remount of last summer's surprise hit production (with all eight original cast members returning), is about, among many other deftly woven-together themes, the insidious power of artistic inspiration, how it enslaves the inspired even as it empowers them, how the act of creating sheds light on the real-world truths about lives and relationships that we might prefer to keep hidden. If this sounds abstract, Handel grounds his lofty ideas in sharply defined characters whose relationships never follow familiar arcs. Don't miss it this time around. Visit justtheater.org.