

Stu on Broadway

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Review by Stuart Brown: *The Shark is Broken* - Playhouse on Park



*John D. Alexander, Jake Regensburg, and Nicolas Greco in *The Shark is Broken*.
Photo by Meredith Longo.*

One of the most defining movies in film history – *Jaws* – is the subject of the three-person play, *The Shark is Broken*. The show is co-written by Joseph Nixon and Ian Shaw, the son of Robert Shaw, who memorably played the crusty, irascible character Quint in the big-screen picture. The play imagines the interactions, tensions and musings of the movie's three stars - Richard Dreyfuss (Jake Regensburg), Roy Scheider (Nicolas Greco) and Robert Shaw (John D. Alexander). They emote, yell, curse, and reflect on a wide range of topics. Their primary beef is with the production delays and the boredom of waiting around for either favorable weather conditions or repairs to the constantly malfunctioning mechanical shark.

The 95-minute, intermission-less, production is basically a constant gabfest – three characters aboard a cramped, floating fishing boat. Director Joe Discher continually applies subtle alterations to the action on stage to keep the encounters and skirmishes fresh and varied. He has the three clambering onboard to start scenes, which are staged in partial blackout. At one point the hard-drinking Shaw climbs atop the Orca (the vessel's name), face to the wind, almost challenging the elements to a fight. In another scene, a very buff Nicolas Greco strips down to his skivvies for a quick bit of sunbathing. All these maneuverings are diverting, at best, but still don't mask the fact that *The Shark is Broken*, even for diehard *Jaws* fans like myself, can feel tedious and strained.

Each of the three cast members has brought their characters to believable life. Jake Regensburg truly embodies the actor Richard Dreyfuss, with his self-doubts and vainness, nervous energy and histrionics. He would be a touch more effective if he slowed down his delivery. John D. Alexander delivers a crusty, hardscrabble performance as Robert Shaw. His monotone leveled speech about the disaster met by the USS Indianapolis in World War II is riveting. Nicolas Greco's Roy Scheider rests somewhere between the other two performers. He brings a mellowness and low-key portrayal that helps balance the production.

The Orca set, by Scenic Designer Johann Fitzpatrick, is sizeable and detailed, but a tad too cluttered. The pool of water in front of the mock-up ship, while providing the illusion of the ocean, wasn't really necessary. Fitzpatrick's Lighting Design, with its muted sunsets and brightly radiating thunderstorm, greatly augment the production. The thunderstorm scene, brief as it is, is greatly enhanced by the thunderous claps devised by Sound Designer Sean McGinley.

The Shark is Broken, running through October 20 at Playhouse on Park. [Click here](#) for dates, times, and ticket information.

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