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Computers and Proteins Make a Lovely Pair

By [Cynthia Citron \(http://smdp.com/author/mod-elame_smdp\)](http://smdp.com/author/mod-elame_smdp) on November 20, 2014 in [Play Time \(http://smdp.com/category/life/entertainment/play-time\)](http://smdp.com/category/life/entertainment/play-time)

PLAY TIME — The set is absolutely brilliant. And so is Itamar Moses.

His play is called “Completeness”, and once again he takes us into an esoteric world and explains it so convincingly that we almost think we understand it.

In his earlier masterpiece, “Bach at Leipzig”, he submerged us in music, explaining the intricacies of composing a five-voice fugue, as well as having the eight intensely earnest musicians debating the state of the religious conflicts prevalent at the time and the nature of destiny and inevitability.

In “Completeness” Moses has the two protagonists “meet cute” in a computer lab. She, Molly, (Emily Swallow) is a graduate student in molecular biology trying to separate and identify the specific functions of individual proteins. He, Elliot, (Steven Klein) is a computer and mathematics geek who offers to create a logarithm for her that will condense her research from thousands of years

of molecular activity and endless generations of evolutionary development to completion in a reasonable period of time.

They have much in common. In addition to being compulsive about their work, they are both commitment-phobic. They engage in long, hysterical discussions about relationships and how to determine if the person you're with is "the right person for you" and not someone who will ultimately bore you to death.

They get together, and break up, and go off with other people. She keeps working with his logarithm and he keeps developing and refining it. And explaining it.

This all may sound like a bottomless discourse, but Moses continually laces the monologues with erratic silliness and very human quirkiness. Lots of fun and lots of laughs.

Especially the scene in which Elliot's previous girlfriend (Nicole Erb) berates him for not knowing instinctively what it is she wants, even when she denies wanting it.

And another well-wrought scene: the confrontation between Molly and her professor/lover (Rob Nagle) as he belittles her work and tries to persuade her to pursue a different research track.

Each of these four principal actors, under the solid direction of Matt Pfeiffer, is absolutely pluperfect. Their certainty, their indignation and their intensity carries the conversation along at just the right speed, and each of them is consistently believable and likeable.

As absorbing and creative as Moses' script is, however, it is spectacularly equaled by Darcy Scanlin's extraordinary scenic design.

To counteract the dimensions of the theater, with its long, very narrow stage, Scanlin has left it bare and latched a series of attractively shaped panels into the walls that open, fold out, and deliver the appropriate furnishings for each scene, and then close up again when that scene is done. When was the last time you saw two Murphy beds onstage?

Also pleasing is Tom Ontiveros' lighting design. Bright but unobtrusive. An encomium you might almost apply to the play as a whole. It's bright, but certainly not unobtrusive.