

## STYLE

COVER STORIES

NEWS &amp; FEATURES

ARTS &amp; CULTURE

CALENDAR

FOOD &amp; DRINK

FORUM

CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONALS

November 7, 2007

[Home](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[About Us](#)
[FAQs](#)
[How to Advertise](#)
[Buy Tickets](#)

## THEATER

October 31, 2007

## The Great White Cope

In Firehouse's "Spinning Into Butter," everyone's hiding intolerance.

by David Timberline

While the tension rises in Firehouse Theatre Project's smart and satisfying production of "Spinning Into Butter," one character blurts out, "Where do we go from here?" You may wonder the same thing watching the play build a strong and rather bleak case in support of the notion that racial misunderstandings are insurmountable.

When a black student starts getting threatening notes at lily-white Belmont College in Vermont, good intentions get misconstrued, compassion is replaced by posturing and honesty leads to petty political backstabbing.

It's a dizzying ride at times, but director Morrie Piersol firmly grounds his cast members in their insular collegiate environment. Katie McCall expertly embodies Sarah Daniels, the administrative dean who becomes embroiled in the controversy while also battling her personal demons. Robert Albertia and Melissa Johnston-Price deliver spot-on performances as Sarah's old-school colleagues, whose reactions to the developing crisis are alternately hilarious and infuriating. But the most nuanced role belongs to Fred Iocovo, who portrays Sarah's namby-pamby former lover, Ross. We are perhaps supposed to dislike this guy, but by the play's end, it's difficult not to admire his earnest belief in the potential for progress.

All the action unfolds in Sarah's office, and Edwin Slipek Jr. (a senior contributing editor at Style Weekly) gets all the details right with his set design, complete with chair rails and appropriately abstract art.

The play is occasionally hampered by an abrupt episodic structure. The overly intellectual musings strain credibility, and the off-hand references to poets such as Yeats, Rilke and Jean Toomer skirt pretension. But a story that manages to mix in an amusing romantic subplot and a low-key mystery remains compelling to the end. Credit playwright Rebecca Gilman for delivering a hopeful answer to her own question in the play's final line; it may be hard for us all to just get along, but she provides a clue about where to start. **S**

"Spinning Into Butter" is at the Firehouse Theatre through Nov. 17 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$10-\$25. Call 355-2001 or visit [www.firehousetheatre.org](http://www.firehousetheatre.org).

• [Click here for more Arts & Culture](#)

**Have an Opinion?** [Write a Letter to the Editor](#)



**Ross (Fred Iocovo) gives Sarah (Katie McCall) a lesson in white liberal guilt in the racially charged "Spinning Into Butter."**

Photo by Jay Paul

ARE YOU GREEN?

Click here to nominate your Green Hero.

Green Heroes are ordinary people & businesses with extraordinary commitment to bettering the environment & their community.

home style.

JRGBC

