

A FIRE WAS BURNING OVER

t h e

D U M P L I N G H O U S E

one
chinese
new year

SHEER TALENT...

REMARKABLE

[A Fire] Plays like Raymond Chandler crossed with Jack Kerouac, as filmed by Robert Altman... [Peditto and Tirabassi] work together beautifully. making their poignant love story take place that instant on that stage.

Richard Christiansen, Chicago Tribune - WMAQ-TV - "Don't Miss"

**DISARMINGLY
EFFECTIVE...**

Intelligent and talented... igLoo has a feisty attitude that bodes well.

Lenny Kleinfeld, Chicago Reader

**A HOT igLoo...
SPECTACULAR**

The creativity and committed ensemble acting mark igLoo as a company well worth watching... Spontaneous, unpretentious, real and very moving.

Albert Williams, Lerner Newspapers

HIP... COMPELLING...

It's good to see a theatre troupe with as much unjaded urgency as igLoo... A most different work.

Dave Hoekstra, Chicago Sun-Times

**SIZZLES... CHECK OUT
igLoo**

Fantastically weird... One of the most delightful and poignant love stories currently in Chicago.

Ellen Cannon, National Public Radio

**ONE OF THE MOST
INNOVATIVE**

and significant theatre companies in Chicago.

Illinois Entertainer

Los Angeles Times

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STAGE BEAT

'Was Burning' an Intriguing Local Bow for igLoo Troupe

By T. H. McCULLOCH

Don't be put off by the title of the igLoo group's first production in its Hollywood space.

The pretentious sounding "A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumpling House One Chinese New Year" doesn't even hint at the chords struck by the writing of Paul Peditto and the lead performances in this production of his Stepplesque exploration of a small-time hustler and his alcoholic, drug-ridden girlfriend.

Horace is a bartender in a Manhattan transvestite bar—well, it's a job—and Baby Jane is a regular customer, hiding under a frowzy wig and behind dark shades. Their mutual spark ignites and they begin a muddled odyssey that ends in Atlantic City, he behind a casino gaming table and she in scroungy Baltic Avenue bars.

It's a disconcerting, harrowing journey. But under Daniel Piburn's theatrical, tightly wound direction, there is also the sense of humor that most people find to help them survive life's traps.

A lot of that humor, and a great deal of insight into what makes Baby Jane tick, is provided by the exceptional performance of Maria Tirabassi as the lost girl trying to find a light to follow. Chris Peditto is fine as the passive Horace, irresistibly drawn to Baby Jane but hampered by his own inability to act on his better judgment. Samantha Kaye also impresses as Jane's junkie girlfriend.

"A Fire Was Burning" is an intriguing local bow for this relocated Chicago company. They're imaginative and unafraid to take chances, and that makes for exciting theater.

At 6543 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, Fridays and Saturdays,



Chris Peditto, Maria Tirabassi in "A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumpling House One Chinese New Year"—a compelling duo.

8 p.m.; Sundays, 7 p.m.; indefinitely.
\$12; (213) 962-3771.

Chicago Tribune

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Chicago Tribune, Wednesday, December 4, 1985

Sheer talent keeps 'A Fire' from completely losing face

By Richard Christiansen
Entertainment editor

There were plenty of things that went wrong on the second floor of 3829 N. Broadway Tuesday night for the premiere of "A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumping House One Chinese New Year's Eve

... The leading man briefly blew his lines early in the proceedings and later drew an unintended laugh when he mistakenly put on an expressionistic mask upside down. Twice during the intermissionless show, the lights in the tiny auditorium went out, forcing the actors to improvise in the dark for a few seconds until a fuse could be restored.

Yet, despite the foul-ups, something fairly remarkable was going on here, too. The small glow of talent in the theater shone through.

Paul Peditto's script, the first new work to be attempted by the fledgling IgLoo theatrical group in its makeshift space, plays much of the time like Raymond Chandler crossed with Jack Kerouac, as filmed by Robert Altman.

It's a love story in several scenes, told by a young man named Horace, a romantic wanderer who is one in a long line of picaresque figures in fiction who walk on the wild side of society.

His story relates how he meets his stoned and abused true love, whom he calls Baby Jane, in a transvestite bar and journeys with her through the lower depths of New York and the bizarre world of Atlantic City. They survive, he picking up what jobs he can and she slipping in

"A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumping House One Chinese New Year ..."

A new play by Paul Peditto, directed by Dan Piburn, with settings and lights by Piburn, Christopher Peditto and Maria Tirabassi. Opened Dec. 3 at the IgLoo, 3829 N. Broadway, and plays at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 7 p.m. Sunday, through Jan. 12. Length of performance, 1:35, with no intermission. Tickets are \$8. Phone 675-9192.

and out of drugs and prostitution. Then, suddenly and sadly, their romance is over.

Familiar as this story of ill-fated love is, as sloppily as it is sometimes constructed, and as random as a few of its scenes seem, there's a ring of truth and a compelling flow in its dialogue.

Horace is a hero with a touch of the poet in him, and Jane is a waif of fascinating personality details. Other characters—a philosophical prostitute, an eager waitress and a friendly druggie—are sketched quickly but surely.

Under Dan Piburn's direction, the action is staged in one central area and on two side platforms, with Horace's narration acting as a bridge between scenes. Lighting effects, when they're working, are used inventively.

Horace is portrayed by Christopher Peditto, the author's brother and IgLoo's artistic director, and the gamin Baby Jane by Maria Tirabassi, the group's managing director. I had not seen either of them before Tuesday night, and I don't know how they might do in the future. But in this play they work together beautifully, making their poignant little love story appear to take place that instant on that stage.

IgLoo's 'A Fire Was Burning' is interesting and compelling

THEATER

By Dave Hoekstra

About a year ago I shared a room with a telephone pole in a transient's hotel on Clark Street. I tried to go to sleep listening to Sonny Rollins but his soothing saxophone was drowned out by the rhythmic wheezing of the veteran next door. The souls of the old guys in the hotel were as spent as the flickering light bulb above my bed, and that's why I think there's too much optimism in "A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumpling House One Chinese New Year," a compelling urban play running through Jan. 12 at the IgLoo Theater.

In what amounts to a "Love Story" for the cough-syrup set, Baby Jane lives with Horace (Christopher Peditto) in a one-room adventure at the radio-in-every-room Hotel Lombard in New York City. Horace is a day-shift bartender at a transvestite nightclub while Baby Jane is a party lizard who needs emotional support as much as she needs her next toot of cocaine.

In trying to understand the painful paradox of Baby Jane's world, Christopher Peditto as Horace shows the gripping clutch he has on his character. Peditto properly underplays Horace, wandering through a variety of dead-end jobs such as a lingerie salesman, a sandwich maker and finally as a student at casino school in Atlantic City. Through an almost heroic desire to become a provider as well as his little quirks, Horace becomes a character you care about.



Christopher Peditto and Maria Tirabassi star in "A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumpling House One Chinese New Year."

A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumpling House One Chinese New Year

Horace	Christopher Peditto
Whore/Lucinda	Tina Krimmer
Whore/Angela	Cynthia Orthal
Baby Jane	Maria Tirabassi
Waitress	Stephanie Barto

A play by Paul Peditto. Directed by Dan Piburn with set design by Dan Piburn. Christopher Peditto and Maria Tirabassi. Music by Tom Waits, Tito Puente and Fear. Presented by the IgLoo Theater Company, 3829 N. Broadway, 975-9192.

It's good to see a theater troupe with as much unjaded urgency as the IgLoo folks. And while "A Fire Was Burning" is a most different work, in that is the adventure of youth.

Christopher Peditto's performance, the hip sensibility of Paul Peditto's writing and the rich employment of the music of Tom Waits and Tito Puente make "A Fire Was Burning Over the Dumpling House One Chinese New Year" an interesting and compelling work.