

# Madeleines, Turkey Stuffing And Other Thoughts on Loss

In works like "bobrauschenberg-america," "Big Love" and "Orestes 2.0," Charles L. Mee Jr. has pulled off impressive feats of literary juggling. His characteristic method is to throw

## THEATER REVIEW

JONATHAN  
KALB

far-flung pop and classical sources together with his own writing to create complex admixtures that read as marvelous distillations of contemporary moods, rhythms and myths. The plays are like Frankenstein-esque porpoises that shouldn't be able to live, much less swim, but nevertheless, in production, manage to dive beneath the surface and emerge with glittering, transcendent fish.

Unfortunately, in Mr. Mee's new play, "Gone" — a 90-minute meditation on the loss of loved ones composed as a pastiche of texts by Proust, Sophocles, Philip Larkin, Al-

len Ginsberg, Mr. Mee's writings, and many other sources — this magic trick doesn't come off. The main reason is that the raw, shocking experience of grief simply doesn't gel with Mr. Mee's multilayered framework of quotation and irony. The form is a leaky vessel apt to waste any sincere feelings poured into it, and the director of this production, Kenn Watt, worsens things by laddering in yet more dubiously connected layers of reference.

The play has no narrative thread. On a plain wooden platform with a video shrine at one corner (bedecked with kitschy cat figures) and shelves stacked high with cardboard boxes around the sides, the cast of six performs scenes whose only clear link seems to be a shared effort to evade the emotional abysses referred to.

Mr. Larkin's melancholy poem "Aubade" is read indifferently by a man wearing a headlamp and lab coat while a woman dozes to the side. An adult actress in a schoolgirl uniform writes what seem to be mortality statistics in chalk on the back



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From left, Pam Diem, Signe V. Harriday and Peter Richards in "Gone."

"Gone" runs through Sunday at 59E59 Theaters, 59 East 59th Street, Manhattan; (212) 279-4200.

wall ("FLU 384, PLAGUE 1,734") while a video of bulls being killed after bullfights plays.

An actor dressed as Proust and attended by erotic dancers masturbates under a fur coat while describing his madeleine-memory surge, after which he lip-syncs to a country-western song. A woman recites the obituary of Ruth M. Siems, an inventor of Stove Top stuffing, after which she and another actress prepare and

serve that stuffing to the audience while spitting like lovers.

The actors grin, groan and moon about gamely, though they plainly don't know why they are saying or doing anything. The deeper problem is not theirs. It's that Mr. Mee's composite picture is fuzzy and diffuse, like a sketch of the trivial amusement that ultimately relieves grief and mourning rather than a resolute exploration of those sufferings.

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# Timberlake, Pop Juggernaut, Is Gaining Some Unusual Fans

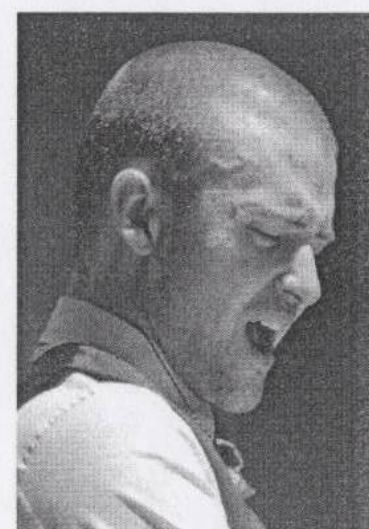
By MELENA RYZIK

He won over the teeny-boppers long ago, but in his incarnation as a sexy-smooth crooner with a hip-hop edge, Justin Timberlake has gained some unusual fans: hipsters.

Youthful urbanites who normally wouldn't admit to filling their iPods with anything remotely Top 40, let alone the music of a performer who can sell out Madison Square Garden, as Mr. Timberlake, 26, did for tonight's show, are suddenly unashamed of their copies of "Justified," his first solo album, or "FutureSex/LoveSounds," his recent chart-topper produced by Timbaland. Members of the Flaming Lips, Coldplay and Keane have come to his shows, and his music is a staple of cooler-than-thou fashion week.

On Monday, at an after-party for the Marc Jacobs show at the club Eugene, the D.J. Duane Harriott played "SexyBack," and the crowd of models, art directors, designers and other insider types hit the dance floor with abandon. "It's a timeless song," Mr. Harriott said, favorably comparing it to the Michael Jackson tune he spun next.

Pete Wentz, the bassist for Fall Out Boy, said at the party: "The cool thing about Justin Timberlake is that he's one of those dudes who can dance, sing, do everything. I went to a *U2* video special show, and he



Alex di Suvero for The New York Times  
Justin Timberlake performing at Roseland last September.

In fact, he told the crowd, he had recently dreamed about playing a show with Mr. Timberlake, a one-time Mouseketeer. (The audience cheered this prospect.) And in December Pitchfork, the online music review bible, anointed Mr. Timberlake "the new King of Pop," and named his song "My Love" the No. 1 of 2006 above indie stalwarts like TV on the Radio and Joanna Newsom,