

## Leveling Up: A Play That's Not About Video Games

I really wanted to enjoy this play but I just couldn't, and this was very upsetting and downright disappointing. I might have some bias seeing as how video games were and still are a huge part of my life. Looking past this bias however I can without a doubt say it wasn't a terrible play by any means. But I can't say it was good. The acting felt very rusty, the message of the show was good but felt lacking different perspectives, There was the character Zander who felt almost unnecessary to the show besides the fact that Ian goes and gets a job. I think the whole premise of the show is make it video game related and have that draw to college students to portray one message to them all. That there needs to be some disconnect with video games or other wise it can be very detrimental to the person's health. This is a great message but the fact of the matter is it's only focusing on the fact of someone who spends all their time on games and not the whole cast. I'd have loved to see Jeannie or Chuck discovering something about how video gaming affected their life instead of just casually playing while the whole play revolves around Ian .

It's a play about how games affect adults but all we saw was the side that affects someone health negatively. It honestly paints gaming in a bad light when video gaming can honestly be someone's saving grace. The script could be formatted so much better instead of Ian sulking around as a common misconception of someone who spends all their time online. The only time I found myself enjoying the play was with Chucks random goofy actions and funny quirks but even then it doesn't make up for the bias script and lazy writing of it all. The abrupt ending felt streamlined and there was nothing that Ian learned besides to go outside sometimes. There however were very powerful scenes like when Ian was in the drone, and has no real disconnect from what's virtual and not.

Overall it was a very technically well done show and very aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Coming at this at the perspective of a Gamer and someone who can say that they were even in Ian's shoes at one point, the use of video gaming was very poor. The acting seemed very rusty and some of the terms peeved me, Looking at this for a general audience means that I need to stop nit picking and say it's worth

watching because overall the main message is a good one and not a talked about topic honestly. It could have been done without certain characters and felt forced.

**Written by:** Deborah Zoe Laufer

**Directed by:** Benji Inniger

**Cast:**

**Ian:** Hans Bloedel

**Jeannie:** Tessa Snyder

**Chuck:** Amir Trotter

**Zander:** David Roemhildt

**Game Emcees:** Beret Ouren, Lydia Lonquist

**Crew:**

**Director and Sound Designer:** Benji Inniger

**Scenic Designer and Painter:** Peter Bloedel

**Costume Designer:** Emily Kimball

**Lighting Designer:** Jake Yenish

**Dramaturg:** Molly Brueske

**Stage Manager:** Kasey Jo Gratz

**Assistant Stage Manager:** Patricia Lilienthal

**Motion Graphics Designer:** Kaydn Wishcop

**Graphic Designer:** John Meilner

**Lighting Operator:** Noella Wigtil

**Sound Operator:** Sophia Weisnesel

**Fine Arts Coordinator:** Sue Harstad

**Fine Arts Manager:** Paul Wold

