

## [Review: Grief Lightning: A Satire In 78 Slides](#)

by [ontherecord](#)

*Paper Mouth Theatre & Wickedly Good Productions present an energetic hybrid of theatre and stand-up comedy in the most passionate lecture you'll ever attend. (Image source: [Paper Mouth Theatre](#))*

By **Helen Karakulak** | [@helen\\_karakulak](#)

Paper Mouth Theatre and Wickedly Good Productions' *Grief Lightning: A Satire In 78 Slides* is a captivating hour that reflects commitment to fandom culture in comedic glory.

Writer, performer and PowerPoint technician Mary Angley dazzles as she dives into the popular *Grease* fan-theories that suggest the plot centres around death and existentialism.

Angley interprets the intricacies of *Grease* being one long coma fantasy had by Sandy after she drowns on the beach in the film's opening sequence. In doing so, she creates comedy out of the chaos of fan-theories, online discourse, and the film itself. This production is an expert display of postmodernism. By playing the role of a lecturer to unpack these fan-theories, Angley anchors the nuances and novelty aspects of popular culture in an engaging academic structure.

Using superior sources university students are consistently warned against —

Reddit threads and Wikipedia — Angley substantiates and builds upon concepts of obsession, gender and the idealism of youth. The props are used to full effect, with appropriate wigs and jackets donned at various points throughout the show. Using only particular props in select moments is a way in which Angley's performance reflects restraint while avoiding crossing the line into farce. Her restraint pays off, maintaining the cleverness of this satire which ensures big laughs.

Adding to the show's success is the use of sound by Dan Thorpe. Thorpe samples the familiar tracks from the film uniquely, adding tensions and delightful melody in places that help steer Angley's performance and cue the intended audience response.

The immaculately presented PowerPoint functions as a set piece while simultaneously providing select lighting, as Angley often emerges from the shadows of the screen projection and stands in the wash of its colours. For the most part, this is effective, particularly in break-out monologues that boast Angley's theatre background. While at times the effect of such lighting can be distracting, Angley's assured characterisation will pull focus back to the performance.

This production draws on the source material an appropriate amount, using select visuals from *Grease* that provide amusing context to parody. Those familiar with the musical will experience nostalgia and the need to reassess their feelings towards it. However, it does not isolate those that aren't familiar with the film. In fact, if you haven't seen *Grease*, I encourage you even more so to attend this production and revel in the blissful chaos that it is.



[\*Grief Lightning: A Satire In 78 Slides\*](#) is playing at Fokus Creatives until February 28 2020. It will continue its run at the Bakehouse Theatre from March 8, in addition to being available to watch from home.

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