

Sharing What Makes Us Laugh: 'Saturday Morning Cartoons' at Pocket Theater - ParentMap

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Sharing What Makes Us Laugh: 'Saturday Morning Cartoons' at Pocket Theater

Six small plays, a tiny theater, big fun

By Gemma Alexander

A lot of parents have struggled to explain to their kids how special Saturday morning cartoons were in the dark days before Cartoon Network. Fortunately, some of those parents are talented playwrights. Based on the adage "Show, don't tell," production company B Sides & Rarities partnered with community theater space **Pocket Theater** in the Greenwood neighborhood of Seattle to recreate the experience of Saturday morning cartoons.

Not just a nostalgia-fest

Despite its inspiration, *Saturday Morning Cartoons* is not just a nostalgia-fest for Gen-X parents. To make sure there is appeal for all ages, five of the six short plays are collaborations between the playwrights and their kids. A sixth piece, "Janitor Smells," is the work of a single adult, but it's so well executed it gets a pass. The sketches **evoke characters and plot lines from classic and modern cartoons, as well as comic books and video games**, so that kids and parents will have to work together to figure out all the references.



Evil scientist Roger Wickersham (Ph.D.)

The humor works on two different levels most of the time, too. Kids and parents won't necessarily get the same jokes, which opens up a lot of opportunity for discussion afterwards. There are **no teachable moments here, just a chance for parents and kids to share what makes them laugh**.

Saturday Morning Cartoons displays all the attention to detail and performance quality of a major theatrical production. The sketches capture the silliness of real cartoons with **simple sets and costumes that mimic the rough caricatures** of commercial television cartooning. Roles like Minecraft Steve and Evil Scientist Roger Wickersham (Ph.D.) may not have the scope for emotional depth that you would find in *Hamlet* or *Othello*, but the actors inhabited their cartoonish realities in full color. My 5-year-old was so engaged in the performance that she jumped when a cardboard block of TNT landed in the aisle next to her.

Is it right for your kid?

There is absolutely nothing to give parents pause about this production. It's a morning of **live theater for less than the cost of a movie matinee**. Nothing is scary, violent or rude. The show's six short sketches run under an hour; there is no intermission.

Pocket Theater is a relatively new venue in the Greenwood neighborhood of north Seattle, operating under a unique financial model that makes it easier for small productions to get off the ground. It's a little bit special for audiences, too. **With only 50 seats in four rows, even tiny audience members can see everything**. Resembling a coffee shop, the lobby is a great place to play games and get snacks before the show.

According to producer Jim Jewell, the idea of collaborating with their kids was so popular that local playwrights were lining up to be part of Saturday Morning Cartoons. There is a very good chance that Saturday Morning Cartoons will become a regular program for B Sides & Rarities. If you can't get tickets to one of the remaining shows, keep an eye out for an all new program in the spring.

Parent tips

- Concessions are available at the venue; there are numerous affordable cafes and restaurants within walking distance of the theater.
- While you're in the neighborhood, check out the **Greenwood Space Travel Supply Company** just down the street. Here are **more tips on what to see in Greenwood**.
- The show is **completely appropriate for all ages**, but kids might need a little preparation to understand the anachronistic premise of the program. For example, the phrase "Don't touch that dial" made no sense to my daughter, who had never seen a TV with physical controls.

If you go...

Where and when: The Pocket Theater 8312 Greenwood Ave N, Seattle; November 15 and 22 10:30 a.m.

Tickets: [Buy online](#), \$10 adults/\$5 kids online (or \$14/\$7 at the door, but shows may sell out in advance)

Parking: There is a small parking lot on the north side of the building and street parking in the neighborhood. Several bus routes serve the nearest intersection. Use the [Metro website](#) to plan your trip.

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