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IN PRINT THIS WEEK BEST OF D.C. CRAFTY BASTARDS PHOTO GALLERIES EVENTS CALENDAR

FRINGEWORTHY

Hip Shot: *They Call Me Q!*

Posted by **Cara Lea Shockley** on Jul. 20, 2013 at 12:04 pm

Gearbox

Remaining Performances:

Saturday, July 20, 1 p.m.

Sunday July 21, 7:45 p.m.

They say: "Indian women, Latina classmates, Caucasian teachers, Black friends, male/female – a voice for the universal struggles for identity and acceptance that are experienced by all nationalities. 'A jazzy gem...ranks with the monodramas of John Leguizamo, Spalding Gray, Camryn Manheim...'"



Cara's Take: **Qurrat Kadwani** has looked at her life and found the moments that shaped it and therefore shaped her. That may sound simple, but it's a true gift to be able to distill the true essentials from the vast sea of experiences, and Kadwani does it very, very well. She begins with her first name, never pronouncing it, but describing it as one that even people in India and Pakistan have a hard time with. Then we begin a trip through her life, beginning with her brothers describing holding her just after she was born—a moment that gets the first of many knowing laughs—and ending with a trip back to India after she graduated college.

She plays 13 characters interacting with younger versions of herself—each of them simply illustrated with one prop or change to her basic costume. But there's another character pervading the play: The Bronx. She talks about the heavily Indian enclave in Queens that her parents chose not to live in and from there begins a loving portrait of the borough they instead inhabited. The Bronx comes alive from the characters she shows us.

A playground bully she fights back against calls her "Carrot." A teacher calls her "Qatar." Others call her "Q-rat" or just "Q," and her mother calls her Ari.

While all the characters come alive in her capable and loving performance, Kadwani's mother is the most vivid of all. I found myself wanting to sit down and swap recipes with her, and maybe learn the right spicing for dal.

The vignettes involving a high school friend, Beanie, and a young woman who paints mehndi are touching and warm. In fact, "warm" is about the best description I can give of this show and its central performance.

See it if: You love personal experiences from different cultures.

Skip it if: Actually, don't.

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