

Theatre: Puppetry of the heinous

New York's *Avenue Q* has taken the West End by storm, but it's not as family-friendly as the Muppets, says Camilla Chafer

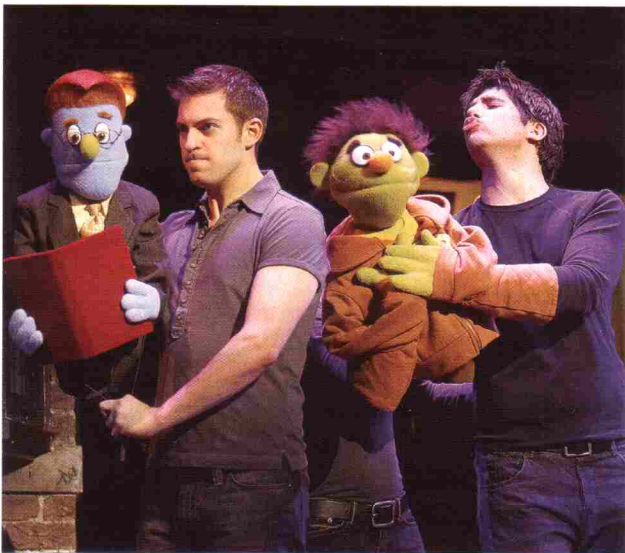
This combination of Muppets and human actors had a small beginning in New York's tiny Vineyard Theatre before transferring to the Golden Theatre, where they wowed Broadway audiences. Now showing in the West End, this show has gone from strength to strength.

In a less than salubrious New York street, Princeton – a bright-eyed preppie Muppet – has recently graduated and is wondering what on earth he can actually do with his degree. Filled with promise and hope for what the big city may bring, Princeton soon finds out life is not so great, especially with friends and neighbours including dreadful therapist Christmas Eve, recluse Trekkie Monster and Lucy.

If you are easily offended this may not be for you, but many will lap up the rude, lewd and naughty comedy which is easily melded with poignant moments about growing up in the big, bad world and transferred to songs such as *Everyone's a Little Bit Racist* and *There is Life Outside your Apartment*.

With themes including homelessness, unemployment, sexuality and internet porn, it's not quite the wholesome Sesame Street of your youth – and certainly not a show for younger offspring unless you want some difficult questions. No, *Avenue Q* is a whole lot funnier!

Avenue Q is showing at the Noel Coward Theatre, St Martin's Lane.
www.avenueqthemusical.co.uk



THEATRE MUSICALS/PLAYS/SHOWS

A MODEL GIRL

Greenwich Theatre, Crooms Hill, SE10 8ES.

📍 **DLR Greenwich**

T: 020 8858 2424.

www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk

Christine Keeler and the Profumo Affair, the story of spies in the 1960s, is visited in this new musical. While romancing a British minister, Keeler was also involved with a Russian spy. Passion and scandal reverberate in a dramatisation of the reported and unreported events.

AMY'S VIEW

Garrick Theatre, Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0HH.

📍 **Leicester Square**

T: 0870 890 1104.

www.garrick-theatre.co.uk

Set in the late 1970s, actress Esme Allen is happily earning a living on the stage, but a visit from her daughter and new boyfriend sets events in motion that can't be resolved until 16 years later. Felicity Kendal leads a brilliant cast.

ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA

(until 17 February)

THE TEMPEST

(from 22 February)

Novello, Aldwych, WC2B 4LD.

📍 **Charing Cross**

T: 0870 950 0940.

www.delfontmackintosh.co.uk/theatres/novello

Two Shakespeare plays see Patrick Stewart star as Anthony during the tumultuous love affair and political struggle with Cleopatra in *Anthony and Cleopatra* before taking up the mantle of Prospero in *The Tempest* in a tale of revenge turned forgiveness.

AS YOU LIKE IT

Wyndham's Theatre, Charing Cross Road, WC2H 0DA.

📍 **Leicester Square**

T: 0870 950 0925.

www.theambassadors.com/wyndhams

A top cast brings to life this Shakespearean play. Rosalind and Celia, played by Helen McCrory and Sienna Miller, flee to the forest to discover love and escape what they fear. In usual comedic form, one is disguised as a boy who falls for a man.