

**FELIX, AMADEO  
CLICK AS WRITERS  
IN JEFF DANIELS' PLAY  
AT MOSAIC THEATRE**

**By Ron Levitt  
Theatre Critic**

It almost seems inconceivable that the actor known for his role in the 1994 film *Dumb and Dumber* could be the same person who wrote *Guest Artist*, the brilliantly scripted, intelligent play currently at the Mosaic Theatre in Broward County. However, Jeff Daniels is the man!

In all fairness to Daniels, he has made 45 films since 1981 including the highly acclaimed *Terms of Endearment*, *Gettysburg*, and a few Woody Allen classics (*The Purple Rose of Cairo* and *Radio Days*). He has a reputation as a stage actor on and off-Broadway, a musician and – though he has written eleven plays for his own theatre in Michigan (the Purple Rose Theatre Company), not until now has he gained (and deserved) the attention of theatre-goers in Florida.

*Guest Artist* -- which runs a Mosaic through Dec, 23 -- has some of the most sharp and intellectual dialogue presented locally in some time. Daniels' work is about a playwright (John Felix) who visits a small town theatre company that has commissioned him what may be his last play. He meets up at the bus station with a young budding playwright (Antonio Amadeo) who idolizes him. Only the ticket man (Erik Fabregat) is able to hear the give and take of these two artists, sort of an "audience of one." The play is Daniels' tribute to the theatre, hero worship and it is all about the risks of being an artist nowadays, "No-one suffers anymore," says Felix, as if to be a playwright, you must endure suffering, and he tells the young writer never to apologize,,,"an artist never apologizes." The dialogue is vintage theatre – the kind of verbiage that will make any writer, theatrical professional or theatre-goer, get a better understanding of what goes on behind the curtain.

Yes, Daniels' script is A-One, and so is the direction by Executive/Artistic Director Richard Jay Simon, who once again makes his small Broward theatre seem big-time. With scenery by Sean McClelland, this Mosaic production ranks with the best of them.

And, even if a script is good, it helps to have actors who deliver. Fortunately, two Carbonell-award-winning actors are on hand – Felix and Amadeo. John Felix once again shows why he is one of the area's most sought after artists, and Antonio Amadeo, who won the 2007 Best Actor Carbonell Award (*Pillowman* – at GableStage) and a nomination for *Elephant Man* at Mosaic, proves why these awards are much more than a one-year recognition. The inter-action between these two actors really works – a tribute to the author's words and the ability of these players.

It is a delight to get into the mindset of a playwright and see how he feels about writing, his actors and the entire theatrical community. *Guest Artist* does that!! It can even make me forgive Daniels for starring in *Dumb and Dumber*, the popular movie about two dim-witted buddies. Obviously, this is not on my list of great movies, despite some people calling it a slapstick classic and despite the fact the movie made a small fortune.

Mosaic Theatre is located at 12200 West Broward Blvd, in the American Heritage Center for the Arts. Call 954 577-8243 for tickets