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The Hazy Origins of Where the Sun Don't Shine

Where the Sun Don't Shine, the new comedy by Peter Budinger and DC Scarpelli premiering at the 2006 San Francisco Fringe Festival, is an affectionate homage to two distinct narrative forms the authors grew up with, one in literature and one onscreen.

"Speculative Fiction" is the term that best encompasses the literary genre. It's a term that overlaps several other genres, including sci-fi, horror, fantasy, social commentary, and straight fiction. The unifying factor of Speculative Fiction is the question, "What if..?" that defines the premise. "What if UFOs exist, but aren't aliens?" "What if the end of the world happened and I missed it?"

Some of the best speculative fiction has a distinct social bent, and this is where our second genre comes in: the midcentury teleplay. With McCarthyism running rampant, the Civil Rights Movement burgeoning and the threat of nuclear war ever present, tensions ran high in the 1950s and 60s. Many dramatic writers, emboldened by the threat of blacklisting, turned to the teleplay as a means of shaking a complacent public into social awareness. Writers like Paddy Chayefsky, Tad Mosel, Reginald Rose and Rod Serling took up the pen in contemplation of everything from social ills and prejudices to our own mortality and place in the world.

And from the union of these two genres sprang shows like *The Outer Limits* and *The Twilight Zone*, which used horror and humor to get their message across. The authors salute their style, lampoon their didacticism and humbly ask, "What if we were writing a show like that today...?"

Further information on Doctor Emile's Theatre Tremendo at <http://www.tremendo.org>

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PHOTO: DC SCARPELLI

Michael Berlin is Your Enigmatic Host in Where the Sun Don't Shine at the San Francisco Fringe Festival 2006