

The Toluca Times

and Canyon City

Two wildly different theatrical plays on the weekend... you just never know what you're gonna see until the lights go down (unless you read my reviews before you go!)

By Nite Lights Pat Taylor on November 21, 2007

Tonight at 8:30



NORTH HOLLYWOOD- Elegant, biting witty, a bit bawdy, and “oh so very British,” Noël Coward was truly a Master of upper-class English snobbery and humor! Presented by the revered Antaeus Ensemble (in their new interim NoHo “home” at Deaf Thetare West,) this is a delicious array of ten of Coward’s one-act plays, first run in 1936, and not seen on the West Coast since 1940! Evening One, “If Love Were All,” and Evening Two, “Come The Wild” will alternate, with the last two being performed separately as special events. (A bit confusing, but a visit to their website at www.antaeus.org will explain everything.) Boasting the talents of six visionary directors and 40 fine actors, each scene has been double cast. I am reviewing here the cast and stories in Evening Two, which was a rewardingly fun musical and comedic experience. (F.Y.I... Don’t be in a rush though, as it ran over three hours.) In brief synopsis’s, I’ll try to wet your appetites, though clearly there are too many worthy cast and production names to mention all. 1. Red Peppers - Directed by Stephan Novinski. Taking place onstage and in the dressing room of a Vaudevillian-type theatre, a long-time married couple, “The Peppers,” performs and then riotously bickers backstage...both are a bit fed-up with life, but their underlying love and devotion is undeniable. J.D. Cullum and Gigi Bermingham, as the lovable lunatics, give spirited, well-timed depictions. 2. Plumed Oak - Directed by Robert Goldsby. In the dining room of a dismally disconnected family in South London, we meet a whiny teenager (Emily Eiden,) a henpecked husband (Josh Clark,) a dour and stern Mother (Laura Wernette,) and her feisty and meddlesome mother (Angela Paton.) (So cleverly penned.) Their hum-drum live are forever changed when the meek Father has a few drinks under his belt... in an unexpected ending. Wonderful! 3. Still Life - Charmingly Directed by Stephanie Shroyer... and my personal favorite act. Unfolding at the refreshment room at a train station, we meet a respectable duo (each married to others,) who innocently meet by chance and fall into a heart touching, but forbidden love affair. Mirron Willis, (Alex) and Shannon Holt, (Laura,) are hypnotically perfect as the star-crossed lovers, and the rest of the cast are delightful fun! 4. Family Album - Directed by Brendon Fox. A family of stuffy, upper-class siblings gathers to read the will of their Father. Beautifully performed by all through songs and dialogue, their behavior and outcome changes dramatically when the nearly deaf butler, (a hilarious Lawrence Pressman) breaks out the “booze” for a toast to Papa. The “tech” work is excellent throughout the show, but A. Jeffrey Schoenberg’s stunning and detailed period costumes must be given a rousing “Cheerio!” For a humorously enjoyable taste of the brilliance of Noël Coward, do try to catch this series celebrating his “gift” for words. All segments running through Dec. 23 at Deaf West Theatre, 5112 Lankershim Blvd. in NoHo. Call (866) 811-4111 for schedule, seats, and more info. Make sure to ask them about their two part Marathon performances on Sundays!