

# ON STAGE LOS ANGELES

FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2018

## PINTER: TAKE TWO AT ANTAEUS

After enjoying the "Ducks" cast for the opening of Harold Pinter's **The Hothouse** at Antaeus, I was delighted to see the "Pelicans" cast to compare and contrast.



Steve Hofvendahl, Melanie Lora,  
John Bobek, Leo Marks, Josh Clark,  
Gregory Itzin, Adrian LaTourelle  
Photo by Geoffrey Wade Photography

On the page, the words of Harold Pinter don't really have a voice. The intention and the severity of the characters is there,

but unlike the poetry of Williams or the starkness of Beckett, the words are more suggestions and it takes a director like Nike Doukas with an excellent cast, actually two excellent casts at The Antaeus, to bring this very odd story of an asylum / rest home /convalescent home to life. It's Christmas! The eclectic cast of characters each have a story to tell, more or less through the eye of Griggs (crisp and present Leo Marks), whose actual job is a bit unclear until we figure out that he stands smartly out of the danger zone and may be the shadow government in charge of the whole shebang!

In the first scene, setting the pace, the contradictions all insisted upon by Roote (Josh Clark) ricochet at a dizzying pace. Roote's complete incompetence is obvious, yet he's managed to attract the very attractive Miss Cutts (cool in red Melanie Lora) to dally and dilly and folderol while she, at the same time charms sweet Lamb (to the slaughter Steve Hofvendahl) and finds that Mr. Griggs is also someone to snuggle up to.

Enter brash and forceful Adrian LaTourelle as Lush, matching Roote's alcohol consumption one for one and then some. His job... (the actual job of anyone seems to have only to do with

shuffling papers as well as the inmates/patients/guests?) is unclear. Guests are never referred to by a name because that's the way it must be done. "6457" is dead but Lush convinces his mother that he's off to another facility. Roote thinks that he has had a chat with him on a date AFTER the patient's death! Impeccable Griggs points out that the diary/calendar of Mr. Roote is sticking poorly in his memory and shows that "6457" indeed has passed away. A clerical error by Roote: a '7' for a '9', shows that 6459 is, in fact.. a woman who has just given birth! Hilarity ensues.

John Bobek as the modest Tubb brings a Christmas cake from the under-staff with a bit more English accent than necessary and after a severe interval and much commotion, we meet Lobb (Gregory Itzin), the new chap in charge of the facility accompanied by the ubiquitous Griggs and life goes on, pretty much as always with the inmates in charge of the store.

The Pelicans bring a totally different energy to Pinter's play and the effect is funny and chilling. Director Nike Doukas has the luxury of a company roster deep with excellent actors to fill Pinter's imagination. The ability to allow the

actors to bring their own energy to each of these roles is the sign of a director who really understands the business of collaboration in the theatre. Julie Keen's costumes, especially for Miss Cutts, reflect to a "T" the style of the fifties. Written in 1958, Pinter shelved the play for twenty years with the first production in 1980. Doukas has captured the fifties and the voice of Pinter with aplomb. With only a few more dates for performance, I highly recommend this show with either cast, but seeing both will be a revelation and the second time, with anticipation, the audience will not be disappointed.

**THE HOTHOUSE** by Harold Pinter  
Antaeus Theatre  
Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts  
Center  
110 East Broadway  
Glendale, CA 91205  
(*between N. Brand Blvd. and Maryland  
Ave.*)

Thursday, March 8, 2018 at 8PM  
Fridays at 8 p.m. March 2, 9  
Saturdays at 2 p.m.:  
March 3, 10 Saturdays at 8 p.m.:  
March 3, 10 Sundays at 2 p.m.:  
March 4, 11, 2018

Tickets and information: (818) 506-1983  
or [www.Antaeus.org](http://www.Antaeus.org)  
[www.facebook.com/AntaeusTheater](http://www.facebook.com/AntaeusTheater)