

Apple Season – Review

By **Dale Reynolds** - August 13, 2019

HOLLYWOOD
Revealed
WE'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE KNOW

There's a relatively new method of getting qualified new plays national exposure: Rolling World Premiere, in which a few theatres around the country agree to simultaneously produce original work.

This latest attempt to expose theatergoers to new plays is "Apple Season" by **E.M. Lewis**, about a farmer in Oregon trying to reignite a thwarted love-affair of twenty years before with the daughter of a newly-deceased, psychotic apple-grower. Will (**Rob Nagle**), in his mid-40s, has been carrying a torch for Mary Elizabeth Fogarty (**Liza Fernandez**) and thinks he's found the perfect time to ask for her hand in marriage as she, having returned to her homestead after the death of her hated father, is inheriting the large apple farm next to Will's.



Rob Nagle and Liza Fernandez star in the MOVING ARTS National New Play Network rolling world premiere production of "APPLE SEASON,"

Her brother, Roger Fogarty (**Justin Huen**), is seen here only in her memory or in monologue-form riding boxcars to his destinations. There is no longer a relationship between them and he'll have no say in the distribution of their property. But Mary Elizabeth wants only to burn down the family's house, with its hurtful memories, and to not marry Will. So what's a plot to do now?



Justin Huen and Rob Nagle

Lewis' play, at about 75 minutes, as well-written as it is, feels incomplete. We do learn much about the three characters' lives – past and present – but not enough to fill in their various futures, which is frustrating as they're realistically presented. It's easy to infer why they are who they are, but limited in actual fact, leaving us perturbed.

On **Stephanie Kerley Schwartz'** apple-dominated set (a good use of the small space), director **Darin Anthony's** carefully-calibrated actors turn in solid performances, all three being gifted at their craft. The heat between Nagle and Fernandez is palpable and Huen is properly off-the-rails.



Liza Fernandez and Justin Huen

I suppose it would be advantageous to see all three theatres' interpretation of the play (in New Jersey and Iowa, but for now, as well-produced as this production is – direction, acting, set and lighting (**Martha Carter**) – it's still an intellectual mystery, fascinating but unsettling. Worth a gander just for the apples on the trees as for the acting. "Apple Season" plays through August 5th, 2019, at the Atwater Village Theatre, 323269 Casitas Avenue, Los Angeles, 90039, by Moving Arts. Tickets: 323.472.5646 or at www.movingarts.org.

Dale Reynolds