

## THEATER

# THEATER REVIEWS: BUG, SCAB, FOWL AND MORE

BY L.A. WEEKLY THEATER CRITICS

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(Photo by David Elzer)

**PICK**  **BUG** It's taken 11 years for Tracy Letts' searing play to reach L.A., via off-Broadway from its London premiere, but the wait's been worth it. Somewhere outside Oklahoma City, middle-aged waitress Agnes White (Amy Landecker) paces her motel room awaiting the inevitable, with no idea what that is. It soon arrives in the form of a mysterious loner named Peter (Andrew Elvis Miller), who seems like a welcome alternative to Agnes' abusive husband, Jerry (Andrew Hawkes), a paroled con who's back in town. Agnes and Peter fall in love, sharing both Agnes' bed and crack pipe. Their bliss is short-lived, however, as Peter becomes obsessed by the insects he believes are crawling out of his body after being planted

there by government scientists. The drama unfolds partly as a piece of Grand Guignol theater, partly as a political fable but mostly as a study of romantic codependency. Director Scott Cummins and an excellent cast strip away the story's sentimental possibilities to leave exposed a raw nerve of dread. Robert G. Smith's motel set — neither the retro-kitsch-filled parlor of road movies nor a water-stained hell hole — compresses a psychic wasteland into a few precious square feet. Sound designer Lindsay Jones cranks up the sense of claustrophobic paranoia with the rumble of semis and the chop of helicopter blades, while Leigh Allen's light plot fills the room with a foreboding chiaroscuro. Los Angeles Theatre Company at the Coast Playhouse, 8325 Santa Monica Blvd., W. Hlywd.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 3 p.m.; thru June 3. (866) 811-4111. (Steven Mikulan)