

London's Scars

Coffeehouse Productions at the Odyssey Theatre

Reviewed by Dany Margolies

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Director Darin Anthony gives a sense of mystery and unease to Richard Martin Hirsch's script that seems to be about coping mechanisms. The play is full of details of time, place, and human pain. A sense of never belonging, sexual urges handled at the expense of an unwilling participant, an accidental death of a child, the feeling of responsibility for acts out of our control, a normally peaceful neighborhood now disfigured and feeling untrustworthy—all these and more are London's scars that represent all of our scars.

In watching Imelda Corcoran play an art therapist with issues of her own, the word shaded comes to mind. Corcoran's completely unselfconscious work has depth and nuance, but she also keeps portions of the character's past delicately hidden behind a sturdy, sensible persona. So, too, Rob Nagle gives his character—the investigating British-intelligence agent—a variety of rich, unexpected details. Instead of "bad acting" shivers and arm-rubbing to show the cold weather, Nagle makes Wiggins sweat itchily through his heavy winter suit. Therapist and agent tussle over the patient: a prostitute who, the evening before a horrific bombing of a quiet West London square, spent time with the bombing suspect. Mary Bishop plays the patient, starting with a thin veneer of childishness and emerging, partially, from her shell-shocked self. Ammar Ramzi gives the suspect an enigmatic characterization. Ann Noble plays an exceptionally stiff co-worker who serves to introduce the audience to several of the characters' issues.

Presented by Coffeehouse Productions at the Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., L.A. May 15-June 27. Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. www.plays411.com/londonsscars