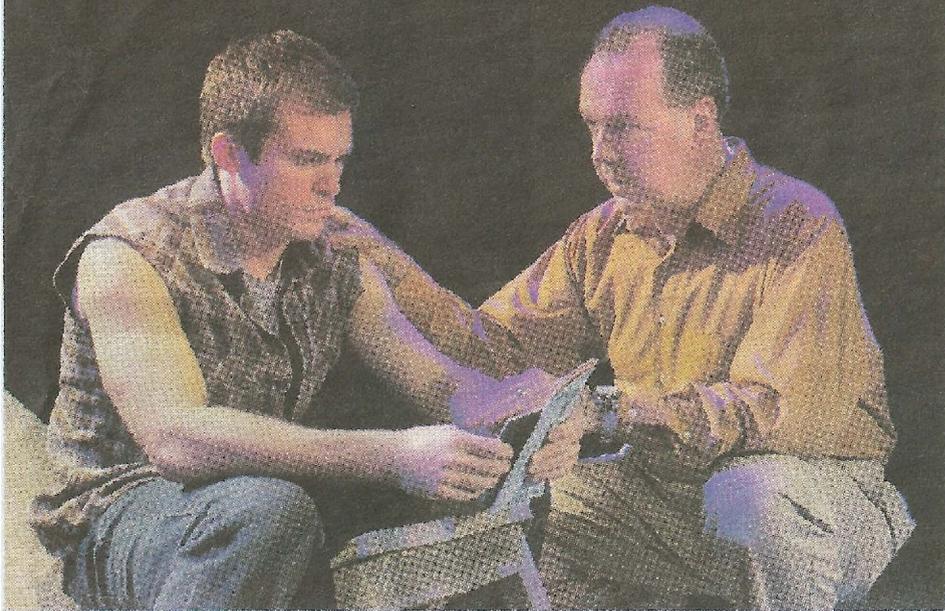


Local Playwright's Shattering Family Drama "Please Don't Ask About Becket"



BY KELLY HARTOG

Pacific Palisades playwright Wendy Graf's latest production, "Please Don't Ask About Becket,"

is guaranteed to make you walk away from the theater asking a million questions... about Becket.

In this intense, family drama, currently being staged at the Sacred Fools Theater in Hollywood,

Graf takes us deep into the inner turmoil of the Diamond Family in the aftermath of their son Becket's disappearance at the age of 22.

The Diamonds are the picture perfect upper middle class family. Mother Grace and Dad Rob (a renowned Hollywood studio head), live in Los Angeles with their twins Becket and Emily, who wait for nothing.

Spanning over 40 years from the 1970s to the present, the play is a series of vignettes including flashbacks, flash forwards and real time scenes. It opens with Becket's twin sister Emily, recounting that her brother has been missing for so many years now that she considers herself an only child, although she still feels he's there as her phantom limb.

The clearly favored "golden child," Becket is fun-loving, blessed with boyish charm and stunning good looks. Emily is always in his shadow. Entering adolescence, Becket's youthful shenanigans take on a darker turn, yet his parents continue to enable him. At first they excuse his behavior, eventually using their money and clout to bail their "perfect" son out of his increasingly dangerous behavior. Eventually, it becomes clear that all the money and the power in the world can't save Becket from himself.

But it's Emily, the responsible one, who suffers the most at the hands of the twin she loves and would do anything for. Ultimately, though, she realizes she has to allow Becket to make his own mistakes, as well as forge a life separate from him.

Graf doesn't shy away from the tough questions that Becket's behavior generates. Were Rob and Grace too soft on their son? Did they enable him? Would his life have taken a different turn if the Diamond's didn't have money or power? Or was Becket's path inevitable, imprinted in his DNA?

For all the questions Graf throws up, she doesn't provide answers. There's no clear understanding of when or how exactly Becket's life took a downward spiral. Graf prefers to leave that to the audience to ponder as the lights come up.

"Please don't ask about Becket," is a beautiful ensemble piece. Deborah Puette as Grace turns in a taut performance, as she continues to try and shield herself from what's happening. Rob Nagle, as Rob, shows a powerful vulnerability as a father desperately trying to do the right thing by his son, and Hunter Garner as Becket provides a nuanced, layered performance as the once happy-go-lucky kid who disappears down the rabbit hole.

The play, though, rests firmly on the shoulders of actress Rachel Seiferth, who is nothing short of luminous as Emily. Watching her grapple with trying to find her own identity, not just from her twin brother but standing apart from her parents, is a tour de force.

Set in the round, on a sparse stage with just a few key props, the audience feels like a fly on the wall in the Diamond household, allowing director Kiff Scholl to create a rare intimacy between his actors and the audience.

"Please Don't Ask About Becket," will leave you wanting to go home and hug your loved ones.

"Please Don't Ask About Becket" runs through Sept. 24.

Sacred Fools Theater Black Box
6322 Santa Monica Blvd., L.A. 90038

Remaining performances:

Fridays at 8 p.m.: Sept. 16, 23

Saturday at 4 p.m.: Sept. 24

Saturdays at 8 p.m.: Sept. 17, 24

For tickets call 323.960.7745 or visit plays411.com/becket