



THOMAS HAMPTON REVIEWS

Written in 1946, *PEACE IN OUR TIME* is Noel Coward's postulation on a United Kingdom under the thumb of an occupying Nazi force. As the nation is worn down by their Nazi 'guests' Coward examines how the occupation effects the pulse of a nation, and how each character chooses to react to the hard facts of life in wartime.

Coward's examination of the toll of foreign occupation on a society is certainly relevant at a time when Americans are at war, but only a sliver of the population is bearing the brunt (with treasure or blood,) and populist movements attempt to define both ends of our political spectrum.

With the local pub standing in for the nation as a whole, regulars either submit to the occupation and surrender identity and values in exchange for riches and preferential treatment by their Nazi overlords, or defy the occupiers and fight, understanding the consequences will most likely be dire. Being an examination of a society, and not the war itself, the villain is not a Nazi, but an effete British intellectual.

The team at Antaeus, headed by Barry Creyton in conjunction with The Noel Coward Society, has reworked the original text. Roughly forty minutes of dated political rhetoric has been cut with no discernible loss to plot or pacing. In an ingenious move, 11 lesser known Noel Coward songs have been worked in to the show, highlighting the mood of the times.

The songs shine as the emotional core of the show, contributing touching, powerful moments that serve as both counterweight to, and amplifiers of, the dire straights our Britons find themselves in.

PEACE IN OUR TIME features immersive sound cues by John Zalewski and a detailed set care of Tom Buderwitz, paired with some gorgeous Forties looks by Jessica Olson and solid performances of over 20 speaking roles by the Antaeus ensemble under the direction of Casey Stangl. In an age when 'Broadway' touring companies at the Pantages feel paired down for the road, this Noel Coward reworking is a must for fans of Coward's music and large casts alike.