

It is always rewarding for me when I have a truly unique play/ production to tell you about.

By Pat Taylor on February 3rd, 2010



Though this job titles me as a “critic,” I never enjoy tearing apart the well-intended efforts and dedication of people involved in a misguided or unworthy production. This week’s offering, tho’ at times tough to digest, is equity waiver theatre at its best!

“Sidhe”

I caught the “Road Theatre’s” opening night performance of this world premiere... and I’m still haunted by the experience! Offering provocative, cutting edge and controversial productions in NoHo for 19 years, this incomparable troupe is both highly-respected and multi-award winning!

From choosing powerful scripts and directors to making impeccable casting choices... to “technical” visions, whether or not you “like” a play here... the overall effort

is always astounding! “Sidhe,” written brilliantly by resident playwright Ann Noble (who also plays the lead role of Louise) with gut wrenching believability... this is a compelling night of thought-provoking theatre (tho’ not for the faint of heart)! Actually, I don’t know how much I should or am capable of revealing about this cerebrally violent journey into the world of sidhe (a Gaelic word, pronounced “shee” which, in Irish folklore, are faeries.) I can tell you that you will be riveted to your seat in a focused awe as the layers of its complex and disturbing tale are peeled away. From the first moments, the audience was deeply entranced, witnessing one terrorist revelation after another. Skilled director Darin Anthony deserves a standing ovation of his very own... His presence, timing and stunning choices were felt in every remarkable performance! Set in a Chicago bar and the run-down flat above it in the 1990’s, the emotionally distraught owner Louise (Noble) is dealing with the deaths of her father and sister. Short of cash, she illegally rents out the shabby flat to a cold, mysterious and darkly aloof Northern Irish couple who insist on total privacy. Patrick Rieger (Conall) and Jeanne Syquia (Jackie) as the suspiciously reclusive duo are both fearlessly flawless in chilling and difficult roles. Rob Nagle is also excellent as Vernon, Louise’s boozing brother-in-law, a Chicago cop mourning the death of his wife. Soon, Louise and Vernon become deeply entangled in the sordid lives of the explosive Conall and the child-like Jackie, who obsessively draws and covets “day-glow” pictures of Irish faeries. In the first act, Noble has written an ingenious smattering of humorous moments, lacing the macabre story as the personal horrors of these people’s lives unfold. In act two, the humor disappears, replaced by mind-bendingly shocking drama, as we try to wrap our head around the violently unexpected chain of events. Who are these strange people? How did they end up here and what motivates their madness?

Kreepy kudos are to: Stephen Gifford (great set), Sherry Linell (costuming), Christie Wright (lighting), David B. Marling (sound) and all of the other “tech” artists who created the eerie mood with perfection. This is heavy stuff, folks, which will be interpreted, I’m sure, in many different ways by audience members. A total “mind trip!”



Running through March 20th at The Road Theatre (5108 Lankershim Blvd in NoHo).
Call (866) 811-4111.