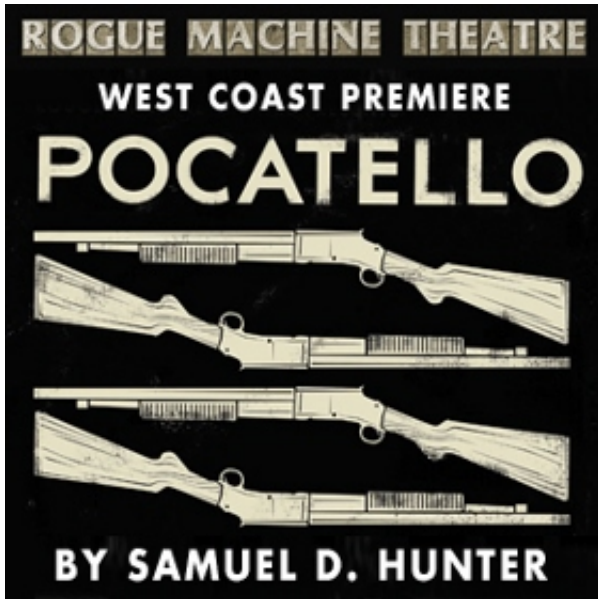


Los Angeles Theater Preview: POCATELLO (Rogue Machine at the Met Theatre)

by [Frank Arthur](#) on February 18, 2016

in [Theater-Los Angeles](#)



TAKE A TRIP TO *POCATELLO*

Since this is a Samuel D. Hunter play, its setting is a nondescript town in Idaho whose business district is besieged by big-box stores and chain restaurants — in this case a pre-fabricated eatery laden with temperamental technology. But unlike his previous studies in isolation, this group portrait of hinterland culture represents the author's confrontation with what spurred him to abandon his roots and embark on the search for an elusive happiness. I saw the play in Chicago, and it is truly one of Hunter's most heartbreaking examinations of our loss of identity as Corporate America gobbles up the land even as we gobble up Corporate America's offerings.

The place is Pocatello, and the eponymous play is the 21st-century version of dying-small-town dramas that are reminiscent of Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*, William Inge's *Picnic*, Neil LaBute's *Reasons to Be Pretty*, and Larry McMurry's *The Last Picture Show*. And Rogue Machine, easily one of the best theater outfits in Los Angeles, is bringing Hunter's play to their new digs at the Met Theatre in Hollywood. This West Coast premiere, which opens Saturday, February 20, and plays through March 27 (but expect an extension), also features one of the best casts you could find in L.A. — Eden Brolin, Anne Gee Byrd, Matthew Elkins, Mark L. Taylor, Rebecca Larsen, Tracie Lockwood, Rob Nagle, Justin Okin, Trevor Peterson, and Jennifer Pollono. And in the City of Angels — where the majority of plays have anywhere from 1 to 2 characters — a 10-person cast is reason to celebrate.

As with Hunter's other works, there is also a lead gay character. But Eddie, who manages an Italian restaurant

not unlike Olive Garden, has much more to attend to than coming out. He is desperately clinging to a town and lifestyle which is being swallowed up faster than his nostalgia can keep it alive. On this day during a “family week” promotion, there is mother Doris and visiting brother Nick with his new wife Kelly.

At another table are the kinfolk of Troy, Eddie’s headwaiter: Senile granddad Cole, a dementia sufferer on furlough from the nursing home; recovering-alcoholic spouse Tammy; and sour teenage daughter Rebecca, a self-styled leftist reluctant to eat most foods. The other waiters are Max, a meth-head now in rehab, and Isabelle, who is without a family and just struggling to survive.

This is one of my favorite Hunter plays, brimming with compassion for Eddie’s world and those who cling tenaciously to this little corner of Idaho. There is something uplifting and exquisitely melancholic at the same time — all while being quite funny.

Pocatello

Rogue Machine Theatre

The Met, 1089 N. Oxford Ave.

Fri and Sat at 8:30; Sun at 3

ends on March 27, 2016

for tickets, call 855.585.5185 or visit [Rogue Machine](#)



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