

Theatre Review: 'The Liar' Gets A Witty, Modern Adaptation



Nicholas D'Agosto, Kate Maher and Gigi Bermingham in the Antaeus Company's production of "The Liar."
Photo - Geoffrey Wade

The Antaeus Company has delivered a sparkling production of Pierre Corneille's 17th-century play *The Liar*. It's a brilliant modern adaptation by David Ives and is one of the wittiest things I've seen in years. This is an impressive feat for any theatre company that specializes in classical theatre because frankly, classics don't always imply fun. It's admirable that even though Antaeus has long been one of the most lauded and entertaining theatre companies in town, they are still trying to be even more accessible to even the most casual theatre-goer.

In the play, it hasn't even been a day since con-man Dorante (Graham Hamilton) is in town; he has already acquired a manservant named Cliton (Brian Slaten) and has attempted to woo the lissome Clarice (Kate Maher). Clarice already has a fiancé—the ridiculously jealous Alcippe (Joe Delafield)—and dismisses Dorante's actions as nonsense. However, her friend Lucrece (Ann Noble) finds herself attracted to the stylish fraud. Unfortunately, Dorante hasn't even taken note of Lucrece, because he's more concerned with escaping the proposed marriage set up by his doting father Geronte (Robert Pine), which would ruin all of his plans.

Antaeus generally double-casts its shows, and this review is from a performance that mixed the two casts. Hamilton is superb as Dorante, a character equally in love with fabrication and himself, with a performance of high physical energy and verbal dexterity that's a joy to witness. Slaten is excellent as the long-suffering Cliton, and Maher is a delightful mix of insouciance and frustrated rage as Clarice. Delafield is appropriately over-the-top as Alcippe and Noble is charming and funny as Lucrece. Pine creates a sense of palpable

decency as Geronte, and Karen Malina White is slyly amusing as twin servants Isabelle and Sabine.

Director Casey Stangl keeps the pacing brisk and gracefully uses the space of the stage. It was an inspiring moment when a mock sword fight found its way in the actual audience. As great as this production is, it's David Ives's adaptation of Corneille's original play that is the true star. Not only is the whole thing translated from French to English and the humor is modernized, but also it's all in verse. It's not surprising that Ives, who has distinguished himself with many comedic works, is exceedingly funny, but his command of rhyme is extraordinary. As I watched the show, I kept finding myself smiling at the dazzling wordplay. Antaeus has done it again, and you owe it to yourself to check it out and have some fun.

"The Liar" plays at the Antaeus Theater through Dec. 1. Tickets are available [online](#).

Contact the [author](#) of this article or email tips@laist.com with further questions, comments or tips.
By [Terry Morgan](#) in [Arts & Entertainment](#) on Oct 17, 2013 5:45 PM