

LOS ANGELES I'M YOURS

Not Gonna Lie: The Liar Is Great Good Fun



Contemporary American playwrights emulating classical “verse” kind of sounds like a recipe for disaster. The current trendy subject of this predilection for adaptation seems to be Pierre Corneille, a seventeenth-century French classicist and author of the polemical *Le Cid* (I will spare you the theatre history lesson but suffice it to say that dramatic structure was of life-and-death importance to the French). NoHo theatre company [Antaeus](#) is currently tackling a David Ives-penned adaptation of Corneille’s [The Liar](#) just a little over a year after Pasadena’s [A Noise Within](#) mounted still another Corneille play, *The Illusion*, as adapted by Tony Kushner. Boasting the same director and leading man (er, better stated, one of them), director Casey Stangl and actor Graham Hamilton can go ahead and team up for any and all adaptations of French classics: *The Liar* is too much fun.



Antaeus “partner casts” their shows, their rationale being that double-casting allows for their actors to hone their classical acting and performance skills while also accepting, y’know, paid acting jobs in the land of film and television. They also tout the added benefit of performances staying fresh since actors may need to adapt to their swapped scene partners. I had the good fortune of seeing a hybrid cast of actors from the two distinct lineups and I would gladly see this production still again with the roles changed out.

To start with, there was nary a weak link. Let me restate: every actor onstage was excellent. The adaptation itself is incredibly witty and Stangl is an expert at seamlessly navigating the meta-theatrical winks to the audience and the more traditional maintenance of the fourth wall. The technical design was similarly flawless: Angela Balogh-Calin’s all-black costumes were a particularly cool and sexy standout while Keith Mitchell’s black-and-metallic scenic design made beautiful use of Antaeus’ very intimate space. It is a stylized, modern world that the production inhabits, a nice counterpoint to the fluffiness of the plot.





The story is familiar enough and essentially a series of love triangles: the titular liar, Dorante, is chasing Clarice, who is masquerading as Lucrece, the proverbial bridesmaid. Confidantes, servants and spurned lovers round out the list as they vie for their own interests and all's well that ends well, although happily there is a bit of a twist. I would say more but you need not any preamble to grasp this delightful, lucid and exceedingly fun production. Just go see it and you will instantly know why it is no surprise that *A Noise Within* and *Antaeus* routinely share actors, directors and designers: they prove that not only can LA do classical theatre, but be hot, chic and relevant in the process.

The Liar is at *The Antaeus Company* Thursday through Friday at 8PM, Saturdays at 2PM and 8PM and Sundays at 2PM through December 1st. (The theatre is dark on Thanksgiving, 11/28.) Tickets are \$30 (Thursdays and Fridays) and \$34 (Saturdays and Sundays). Call [818-506-1983](tel:818-506-1983) or [purchase tickets online here](#).