



Gia On The Move

'Forever Bound' at Atwater Village Theater – A Total Eclipse



by Tracey Paleo, Gia On The Move

Forever Bound the new play in a world premiere at Atwater Village Theatre written by Steve Apostolina, directed by Ann Hearn Tobolowsky and starring French Stewart (*3rd Rock from the Sun, Secrets and Lies, Pastime*), Rob Nagle (*The Hothouse, Stupid Kid, Church & State*), Emily Goss (*Ah Wilderness, Clown Bar, A Gulag Mouse*) and Steve Apostolino (*Revenge, Southland, HomeFree, Flight of the Penguin* [playwright]) is a next-level, Good versus Evil, 'revenge is sweet' dark, dramedy that has sewn together as a playwriting-magical-moment production.

In a superb simplicity, the writing, the acting, the space, the dynamic tension, moral compass and of-the-day reasoning come into play with a hyper-real, perfect synergy.

In an attempt to save his dying business, used books dealer Edmund (Stewart) and friend Shep (Apostolino) concoct a risky scheme to steal rare books from Thomas (Nagle), his competitor's home. But when they carry out the plan, they accidentally discover a mind-blowing, depraved secret about Thomas, that no one could have imagined, and they are forced to decide if justice means taking action on the truth or doing nothing in order to protect the innocent.

There is a definitive 'thriller' element to this play which is immediately set by an eerie, vignette between an older man and a young woman (Emily Goss) whose name we come to know as Rosalind, and being almost forcefully tutored in classical literature. It's a delicious and oddly curious scene when placed side by side with scenes of Edmund's dilemma about his own survival and Shep's humorously extraverted solutions.

What is absolutely astounding here is how the actors in this production powerfully fill the literal and metaphysical space without clutter. The profundity of the scenario, the carefully placed, identifiable literary references, the environment itself, fully permit the players to act with an edge-of-your-seat, fluid, alacrity right to the last moment.

French Stewart brings a whole other level of humanity to this production. His performance is so multi-layered, so empathetic, sitting in the audience is in fact, sitting in the room, deeply embedded in the action and emotion.

Nagle as the villain, takes over the entire stage with such power and absolute stillness that the psyche of the character is perceptually normalized to a frightening degree.

Apostolino is the surprise in this story with surface comedy underlined by vivid motivation and clear cut action to right what's wrong.

Emily Goss is intelligent and riveting creating a triumphant turnabout at the finale that is so juicy one can't help but remark about the villain, "*He must be proud. He taught her well.*"



**Rob Nagle and Emily Goss. Photo by
Kathy Flynn**

Very Highly Recommended

Forever Bound was developed at The Road Theatre and Antaeus Playwrights Lab.

Written by Steve Apostolina

Directed by Ann Hearn Tobolowsky

Starring: French Stewart, Rob Nagle, Emily Goss, Steve Apostolina

Scenic Design by Pete Hickok

Lighting Design by Bosco Glanagan

Sound Design by Michael Lawshe

Costume Design by Joanie Coyote

Dramaturg Kevin Delin

Photos by Kathy Flynn

Photo (above): French Stewart and Steve Apostolina