



PEACE IN OUR TIME
Deaf West Theatre
by Carol Kaufman Segal



Noel Coward wrote many hits in his day, but one play that he wrote, *Peace In Our Time*, was not one that drew audiences, much to his disappointment. This anti World War II drama may have been too serious for theatergoers in those days, and maybe it wasn't what they were expecting from Noel Coward. It is still rarely produced, but that is unfortunate, because it is an exceptionally interesting concept, exceptionally written, and in this production, superbly acted. This production is presented by the Antaeus Company, skillfully directed by Casey Stangl, and most notably adapted by Barry Creyton.

A double-cast ensemble performs the 22 speaking roles at different presentations. The evening that I saw the play, all 22 actors were stupendous, and I would expect that nothing would be different in the performances by the alternating cast. It happens in 1940 and England is under the occupation of the Nazis. Has anyone ever wondered what it would have been like if Germany had won the war?

This play can give you some insight into such a dire situation. Unlike the original, in his adaptation, Creyton made a few changes like

cutting out twelve characters and about forty minutes of dialogue, and adding nine of Coward's lesser known songs. Set in a London pub, the scenic design by Tom Buderwitz and costumes by Jessica Olson, help set the time and place, and the lighting design by Jeremy Pivnick sets the mood throughout. With so many characters in this production, it is difficult to point out each by name but all, as mentioned before, deserve accolades for their performances.

The music and the lyrics bring back the time and the state of affairs. With the grave seriousness of this play and the tense moments that occur, it is not without some humor. The music and lyrics are a respite that also sets the time and tone. The closeness of the characters, their loyalty and love of country is never lost. And just maybe, this helps England to win out in the end.

Peace In Our Time is playing at the Deaf West Theatre, 5112 Lankershim Blvd. in North Hollywood. Performances are Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 PM, Sundays at 2:30 PM, continuing through December 11, 2011.

For tickets, call (818) 50601983, or go online at www.Antaeus.org. Highly recommended.

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