

Theatre Review >> That Good Night

Written by Christine Palau - Theatre Reviewer



As written by Andrew Dolan, *That Good Night* is, at the core, a very sad story about a family coming together to deal with their dad's (Leon Russom is ferocious as the comatose father) last days. Dolan knows a thing or two about psychology and treats the **trauma at hand, by administering the audience some heavy-duty doses of hilarity. Under the inspired direction of Scott Alan Smith, the talented ensemble cast delivers the story with a loaded fierceness that pushes and pulls the audience through a range of complicated emotions.**

Before the lights even go down, you get a sense of the family—especially, the quintessentially Catholic matriarch, Millecent O'Dywer. Set designer Stephen Gifford, whether by research or experience, has created a barely tasteful, middle class living room: a crucifix over a bedroom door, a framed photo of Pope John Paul II, with a rosary draped across. A red, "Best Dad" coffee mug sits at the bottom of the bookcase in the corner, not necessarily wanting to be noticed.

The Corinthians-quoting, obsessive-compulsive, Millicent (Judith Scarpone) is frantic as she prepares for the arrival of her daughter and two other sons. The youngest son, Sean (Bernie Zilinskas), a scrappy 37-year-old, who still lives at home, is a cynic, clown, drug addict, and naturally, a voracious reader. It's through Sean's jokes, observations, and hurt that the heart of the **play** rests.

Alice (Elizabeth Sampson) is the only daughter, and Dad's favorite. She's a budding "not-fiction" writer with secrets she doesn't quite want to share. There's also the bitter, former frat-boy son, Chuck (John Cragen), who brought, not his wife, but a date, Louise (a remarkably honest performance from Keelia Flinn). The other son, Danny (Chet Grissom) and his wife Gretchen (Melissa Kite), swingers turned Buddhists (props to costume designer Mary Jane Miller for outfitting these two), likewise add to the comic relief of the funereal heaviness, that is the O'Dywer family's reunion, or communion.

That Good Night is dark comedy at its finest. It'll undoubtedly make you laugh, it may make you cry, and if you let it, it just might tear you apart.

Show runs to July 21

Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm; Sundays at 2 pm

General Ticket: \$25

Preview Ticket: \$20

Online Tickets: www.RoadTheatre.org

Road Theatre at the Lankershim Arts Center

5108 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA, 91601

Telephone: 866-811-4111

Website: www.RoadTheatre.org

Theatre Reviewer: Christine Palau is a speechwriter at the Korean Consulate in Los Angeles, and has recently **completed** her first novel Freebies.

Photo: *Bernie Zilinkas and Melissa Kite star in the World Premiere of the Road Theatre Company production of THAT GOOD NIGHT, written by Andrew Dolan and directed by Scott Alan Smith and now playing at the ROAD THEATRE THEATRE.*

PHOTO CREDIT: *Deverill Weekes*