

"Top Girls" at the Antaeus



Karianne Flaathen and Sally Hughes

Photo by Daniel G. Lam

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Top Girls

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Success is always far more complex than the popular media would suggest. That point seems to be one of the driving forces behind "Top Girls" the Obie Award winning comedy by playwright Caryl Churchill. The play begins as a small group of highly successful women from various and widely divergent times and places meet for lunch and discuss their lives. It quickly begins to reveal a broad

spectrum of nuance in the realm of feminism, ambition and power. It is a woman's perspective but it goes much deeper than carrying signs and chanting slogans. Most intriguingly of all perhaps is that it also exposes consequences.

In the unique style of the Antaeus Theatre the show is partner cast, meaning there are two actors for each role or group of roles. The cast on opening night were all simply superb. But Sally Hughes as "Marlene" and Karianne Flaathen as "Joyce" were absolutely magnificent.

But in truth the full essence of the show did not completely reach me until well after the curtain. In fact at the opening I was a bit troubled by the Japanese accent as portrayed by Kimiko Gelman. It could just be my ancient ears but I did spend a year living in Japan and the accent I was hearing just didn't resonate. Alas a minor detail.

However, as the play progressed I found myself wondering just exactly what was I watching. Many times throughout the show flashes of cognition hit my brain yet I continued to wonder, "So where is this taking me?" Even as the show ended the picture had not fully developed in my head but I did recognize an essence that steadily grew.

Okay so call me slow but at the reception that followed one person involved with production confided with me that she had had much the same experience. But I could not get it out of my mind nor did I want to push it aside. Eventually there was a revelation on many levels making this one of the most unique theatrical experiences in my more than half century of theatrical experiences. Go and watch this show. You will experience fine acting, considerable wit and a deeply poignant story.

"Top Girls" is playing at the Antaeus Theatre, 5112 Lankershim Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91601 now through May 4th 2014. Show times are Thursdays and Fridays at 8:00 PM, Saturdays at 2:00 PM and 8:00 PM and Sundays at 2:00 PM. Ticketing information is available at www.Antaeus.org or by calling 818-506-1983. You may also enjoy the Antaeus facebook page at www.facebook.com/AntaeusTheater.

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