



Daniel Blinkoff and Devon Savari star in 'American Tales' in Mark Twain's story 'The Loves of Alonzo Fitz Clarence and Rosannah Ethelton.'



Nite Lights

By Pat Taylor

I saw two worthy plays last week. Both were originally written cons ago...yet both are still valid today. People just don't change that much, do they?

American Tales

NORTH HOLLYWOOD An enthralling evening of theatre, outstanding in every aspect...the audience was mesmerized! For 15 years, The Antaeus Company has produced high-quality, classic theatre in L.A., and have been consistently recognized and highly-awarded for their vision and choices. This world premiere musical is presented in two unrelated one-act plays. Based on the works of Mark Twain and Herman Melville, and beautifully written/adapted by Ken Stone (book and lyrics) and Jan Powell (music), this is a magical must-see! Directed with gut-wrenching genius by Kay Cole and Thor Steingraben their cast of five actors takes us on two unique journeys.

The Loves of Alonzo Fitz Clarence and Rosannah Ethelton (inspired by Twain): A comical and sweet love story that develops due to crossed wires on the newly-invented telephone. A "delicious" peek at pre-online dating in its original and purest form... Who could have imagined how popular meeting your soul mate, sight unseen, would become a century later? Rosannah in San Francisco and Alonzo in Maine, a dignified and proper duo, begin a series of heart-fluttering conversations due to a glitch in their phone connection. Growing closer with each call, each vividly imagining the other's appearance, Burley, a devious suitor of hers, (clearly after her money) taps the line to halt their communication. This deed sends Alonzo on a global search to find and meet his true love. Flawless performances by the entire cast, both in singing and acting abilities. (The storytelling songs are wonderful!) Devon Savari paints a pretty picture as the love-struck damsel, Daniel Blinkoff gives a remarkably multi-layered turn as Alonzo, and

Raphael Sbarge is desolately dashing as the villainous Burley.

Bartleby, the Scrivener (inspired by Melville): Taking a much darker turn, with an eerie "Twilight Zone" vibe, this intriguing piece takes us into a law office, headed by a "no nonsense" lawyer (an impressive Peter Van Norden). When Bartleby, an oddly secretive man, is hired, (brilliantly played by Raphael Sbarge) questions of human frailty and acceptance are raised. A tragic and emotionally unrevealing man, one day he flat-out refuses to work, yet returns to his desk daily, answering every question with, "I would prefer not to." As the lives of the other workers are compromised, the location of the offices is moved, and the boss has tried to terminate him... but he simply will not leave. Why? Who is this odd little man, and why won't he go? A hypnotically strange tale, well performed by the same actors as in the first act. (Devon Savari, Daniel Blinkoff, and John Combs in supporting roles.) Performed by alternating casts, I'm told that the other cast is also very good. A stunning collection of 17th century costumes by A Jeffrey Schoenberg, scenic design by Laura Fine Hawkins, music direction by Steven Laird Jones & Billy Thompson, a fine onstage trio, lighting by Jose Lopez, and sound by John Agicella, set the mood perfectly! Do see this one! Running through Aug. 17th at Dead West Theatre - 5112 Lankershan Blvd. in Nolfo. Call 866-811-4111.

The School for Scandal

TOPANGA CANYON The third of five plays running in rep here all summer, Richard Sheridan's bitingly funny British comedy of manners, is jolly good fun! Zany, smart, witty and downright wacky and fast-paced, it is a challenging job to catch it all! A hilarious look at upper-class snobbery, and the hypocrisy, confusion and consequences that result from malicious gossip... the clever and still relatable "barbs" are non-stop! Issues "whispered" behind closed