Tonight at 8:30 (Part 2 — Come the Wild)
(Deaf West Theater; 60 seats; $30 top)
An Antaean Company presentation of four one-act plays by Noel Coward. Directed by Stefan Novinski, Robert Goldsby, Stephanie Shroyer, Brendon Fox. Sets, John Iacovelli; costumes, A. Jeffrey Schoenberg; lighting, Jose Lopez; sound, John Zielinski; musical director, Matt Goldsby; production stage manager, Young Ji. Opened, reviewed Nov. 10, 2007; runs through Dec. 23. Running time: 3 HOURS.
George/Johnnie/Richard .......... JD Cullum
Lily/Dolly/Emily ............ Gigi Bermingham
Alf/Stanley .................. Ramon DeOcampo
Bert/Burrows ................. Philip Proctor
Mr. Edwards/Jasper.......... Robert Pine
Mabel/Mrs. Rockett ............ Angela Patton
Elise/Mildred ............... Emily Eiden
Doris/Harriet ................ Laura Wernette
Henry/Albert/Charles ........ Josh Clark
Laura/Jane .................... Shannon Holt
Myrtle ....................... Summer Drazda
Anne Gee Byrd .............. Beryl
Alice ......................... Angela Goethals
Alec/Edward .................. Mirron Willis
Bill .......................... Ryan Spahn
Lavinia ....................... Amelia White

Paton), accuse and complain at each other as teenage daughter Elise (Emily Eiden) whines. Long-suffering husband Henry (Josh Clark) seems oblivious, until that evening when he tells them abruptly he's leaving for good, but, before he goes, he intends to tell them what he thinks of them all.

"Still Life," (which was adapted into David Lean's classic film "Brief Encounter") concerns the short but intense love affair between Laura (Shannon Holt) and Alec (Mirron Willis), two married people who meet by chance in a railway station cafe. At first content to be friends, the couple falls passionately for each other. But the guilt from betraying her marriage becomes too much for Laura to bear, and the relationship — likely the most important one of their lives — must end.

"Family Album" takes place at a funeral wake. The patriarch of the Gilpin family has died, and his adult children and their husbands and wives are gathered to mark the occasion. Jasper (Robert Pine) isn't feeling particularly glum, however, reminding his siblings about what they could buy with their inheritance money, which lightens the mood considerably. Lavinia (Amelia White) finds this frivolity shameful, at least until she's had a few drinks and finally admits the truth about their deceased father.

Cullum and Bermingham are a sheer delight in "Peppers," both in their corny comedy act and their hilariously bitter infighting. Cullum is also amusing as the sardonic brother Richard in "Album," and Bermingham is just right as the oblivious Dolly in "Life." Wernette and Paton are excellent foils in "Oak," each trying to outdo the other in self-righteousness, and Eiden is gawkyly great as the petulant Elise, screeching and stomping and sobbing to get her way. Clark is very funny as the giddy Henry, slapping his mother-in-law and relishing his escape, and he's equally fine as railway station employee Albert in "Life."

Holt is a marvel, fragile and nervous and brave in "Life" yet darkly comical in "Album," in a pair of perfs that ably demonstrate her impressive range and talent. Willis is excellent as the smitten Alec, and a silent scene of Laura and Alec gazing at each other, sheer longing in the air between them, shows that words are not always necessary for great acting. Anne Gee Byrd is crankily amusing as cafe manager Myrtle, and White is very fine as Lavinia, each perf both funny and surprisingly touching. Finally, Pine brings a seemingly effortless charm to his role as Jasper, and Philip Proctor is quite good as the loyal if mostly deaf servant Burrows.

Directors Stefan Novinski ("Peppers"), Robert Goldsby ("Oak") and Brendon Fox ("Album") do terrific work with their comedies, with perfect pacing and lively staging. Shroyer, however, outdoes herself with "Life," getting subtle, layered performances from her cast, deftly balancing comedy and drama, using sound and lighting expertly — the loud train sound effect begins to seem like the onrush of doom — and ends up with perhaps the best of all the one-acts in this production. Mention should be made of John Iacovelli's sets and A. Jeffrey Schoenberg's costumes, both of which continue to add color and depth to each part of this admirable show.

TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 13, 2007