The Autumn Garden at Antaeus dissects love but brings hope.
by Christina Torres

Everything changes with the return of the hometown-boy-turned-famous-artist forces everyone to reconsider their past, their futures, and the choices they have made. While the casual observer might see the play as “pessimistic,” the play shows what Hellman believed about life and choices that we so often seem to forget: people can not only control the course of their lives, but attain much from them as well.

Antaeus provides a full double cast for every show, in an attempt to ensure that performers stay sharp, and create an environment of collaboration among company members as well. This, combined with sharp music cues and a beautiful and innovative set meant two different powerhouse nights of theatre. While both casts were wonderful, they each offered very different experiences in the small black box theatre.

"The Idealists” live up to their name—the ensemble works phenomenally well together and while the show’s humor does not play as obviously as its partnered cast, the show has a much more serious and pensive tone to its story. In truth, every member of the cast deserves accolades for their performance.

Kurtwood Smith was both delightfully gruff and desolate as he struggled to find his place as General Griggs., and Josh Clark’s Will had a musicality and wisdom that really changed the perspective of the character. Jeffrey Nordling offered a very different take on Stephen Caffrey’s Nick had the outrageousness and frustrating charm needed to both love and hate him, and both Stoney Westmoreland and Shannon Holt portrayed Constance Tuckerman’s boarding house, living through the social rituals and routine.

The Autumn Garden, written and produced by Hellman in 1951, was well reviewed but not publicly loved by its audience at the time. The show is a dark comedy: it looks at the lives of middle-aged Southern families living in a “gentle” and upper-middle-class world of etiquette, brandy on the porch, and small town gossip. The group of friends has spent the past 23 summers at Constance Tuckerman’s boarding house, living through the social rituals and routine.

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The Autumn Garden runs through December 19th, with shows 8p shows Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and Sundays at 2:30p and 7:30p. Tickets, as well as Cast Performance Schedules are available at http://www.Antaeus.org or (818) 506-1983. Tickets range from $30-34 dollars, and running time is about 3 hours.

The Antaeus Company is located at the Deaf West Theatre, at 5112 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, CA, 91601.