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THE MORNING LINE

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Boneau/Bryan-Brown will close each Friday at 2:00pm beginning June 17 and continuing through September 2.



The New York Times

August 26, 2016

Prominent Producers Hope to Bring ‘Indecent’ to Broadway

By Michael Paulson

Two Tony-winning producers say they are hoping to bring to Broadway a production of “Indecent,” by the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Paula Vogel.

The play would be the first by Ms. Vogel to reach Broadway. Also of note: So far the current Broadway season features no new plays written by women.

The producers, Daryl Roth (“Kinky Boots”) and Elizabeth McCann (“The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?,” who produced with Ms. Roth), said that in collaboration with Cody Lassen (“Spring Awakening”), they would present “Indecent” this season if they were able to secure a theater. (With multiple long-running musicals and record-level audiences on Broadway, there are more producers seeking theaters than there are theaters available.)

Ms. Roth said it would cost \$3.2 million to mount the show. “We loved the play so much and feel compelled to make it happen so more people can see it,” she said. “I don’t know that it is a commercially successful offering, but I wish that it could be.”

“Indecent,” which ran earlier this year Off Broadway at the Vineyard Theater, is a play (with music) about a play. It examines the controversy over a 1923 Broadway show, “God of Vengeance,” that was shut down after the police charged the cast members with obscenity, at least in part because of a lesbian relationship in the plot. (“God of Vengeance,” by Sholem Asch, was originally written in Yiddish in 1907, and was performed in Europe and the United States before its abortive run on Broadway.) The producers said they aimed to bring it to Broadway with the Vineyard cast.

Writing in The New York Times, the critic Charles Isherwood called the new play, which was directed by Rebecca Taichman (also a creator of the show), “powerful” and the production “superbly realized.”

Ms. Vogel won a Pulitzer in 1998 for “How I Learned to Drive,” which has been produced twice in New York, both times Off Broadway.



The New York Times

August 26, 2016

Review: In ‘The Layover,’ Strangers on a Plane and Missed Connections

By Charles Isherwood

Has anyone ever enjoyed a layover? Either it is nerve-janglingly short or grindingly long. “The Layover,” a disappointing new play by Leslye Headland that opened on Thursday at Second Stage Theater, achieves the novel feat of being both at the same time. Running a little more than 90 minutes, it doesn’t succeed in bringing us deeply into the lives of its principal characters. And yet we don’t exactly leave pining for more of their company.

Ms. Headland, whose comedy “Bachelorette” remains among the most scorchingly funny new plays I’ve reviewed, has muffled her comic verve almost completely in this play, although the dialogue occasionally crackles with sharp-elbowed exchanges. Instead she has written a dark drama about infidelity and its unforeseen consequences.

Annie Parisse and Adam Rothenberg, both terrific, play Shellie and Dex, business-class seatmates on a flight to New York stuck in Chicago. They strike up a getting-to-know-you conversation that pivots between flirtation and antagonism. Dex reveals that he’s an engineer who lives in San Diego but is on his way to visit his fiancée. Shellie says she’s a professor who teaches “American crime fiction” and is happily unattached.

Apropos, vaguely, of that crime-novel allusion, Dex brings up the subject of the “perfect murder.” Talk turns to Patricia Highsmith’s “Strangers on a Train” and the Alfred Hitchcock movie made from it — in which, you’ll recall, two men who meet by chance on a train exchange confidences that end in double murder.

Unseen supertitle: foreshadowing! Ms. Headland intimates that we are in store for psychological entanglement and perhaps something darker. But the mood brightens (I guess) when, after the flight is canceled, Shellie and Dex meet again in the airport. By now, he has decided firmly in favor of seduction, and soon they are sharing a hotel room.

From here, the play’s focus divides to give us glimpses of Shellie’s and Dex’s home lives. In overlapping scenes, we learn that, while Dex was more or less honest, even in regard to his ambivalence about his coming marriage, Shellie was purveying her own American fiction.

Not single, she is married to Kevin (Quincy Dunn-Baker) and lives with him and her father, Fred (John Procaccino); their home life does not accord with her professed profession either. Fred, who is epileptic, is in a wheelchair and requires lots of care. Shellie toils at two jobs — cutting hair and doing janitorial work — while Kevin does little more than sell Fred’s pills.

On the other side of the stage, things begin to go sour for Dex when his fiancée, Andrea (Amelia Workman), who suspects he’s been unfaithful, flies into a rage and kicks him out of her apartment. As dual scenes of their domestic miseries unfold, Shellie and Dex appear to exchange glances, as if in their mind’s eye they are watching each other — or the life they might have had together.

Ms. Headland is a skilled writer of pithy, funny dialogue, but the characters in “The Layover” are so often in either attack, defense or complaint mode that their eloquence does not bring much pleasure.

Under the slick direction of Trip Cullman, the overlapping scenes that take up much of the play’s middle section are crisply choreographed. The flickering film-noir images provided by the video designer Jeff Sugg are a nice distraction from the mostly glum proceedings.

And the cast is first-rate. With her fashion-model beauty, Ms. Parisse may be a stretch as a woman stuck cleaning floors in small-town Illinois. Nor does the smarty-pants sparkle in Shellie’s dialogue with Dex seem to fit. But Ms. Parisse brings a sorrow to Shellie’s problems that, while not exactly cheering, at least feels honest. Mr. Rothenberg imbues Dex with a brooding unease, as Dex finds himself increasingly distracted — or rather obsessed — by memories of his encounter with Shellie.

Among the supporting players, Mr. Procaccino grouses amusingly as the morose Fred, who seems to hate only the feckless Kevin more than he hates himself. Fred’s sourness, in fact, is emblematic of the play. As he says, when Shellie confesses her dalliance and wonders about escaping her unhappiness, “You either steal someone else’s life, or you stay put.”

Ms. Headland’s view of humanity here is tarmac-black; the possibility of happiness is depicted, or at least discussed, as a chimerical delusion. And the unfolding of the plot, with its lurid final twist, seems infused with an almost Victorian moralism. Sins, however venal, will be duly punished by the brutal hand of fate.

I could almost believe that “The Layover” was written in a fit of frenzied annoyance during an endless flight delay, the kind that does indeed find your mind boiling with vicious thoughts: about the woman beside you chattering mindlessly on her phone, the unhelpful flight attendant, your own misguided choices and — yeah, them, too! — the whole benighted human race.



The New York Times

August 26, 2016

Review: In 'A Day by the Sea,' Words Unsaid or Said Quite Bluntly

By Neil Genzlinger

There's so much to like about the Mint Theater Company's revisiting of "A Day by the Sea" that it's hard to know what to single out for first-paragraph attention. Let's go with this: Even secondary characters in this 1953 play by N. C. Hunter are given the chance to make an impression, and in this production they do.

The play presents us two days in the lives of an English family in coastal Dorset, where Laura Anson (Jill Tanner), a 65-year-old widow, is having a visit from her 40-year-old son, Julian (Julian Elfer). Also returning to the homestead is Frances Farrar (Katie Firth), who was raised by the Ansons after she was orphaned but has been not been back to Dorset in years. She brings to the reunion two children and a romantic history full of pain, loss and scandal.

The overall portrait is of an economically comfortable family in an anxious age, the postwar years when Europe was still shellshocked from two world wars and England's leisure class was feeling unmoored. Within this big picture are personal stories, ones of frustration, longing and missed opportunity. A program note tells us that Hunter was sometimes accused of mimicking Chekhov, and it's easy to see why. But imitative or not, this is a very well made play, and Austin Pendleton, the director, gets the most out of it.

Julian is the main focus, a man consumed with global issues and impatient with his mother for her seeming uninterest in them. He's a workaholic, though on this eventful visit home he comes to realize that all that effort has made little difference in solving the problems of the day or in advancing his career. Mr. Elfer is terrific, and so is Ms. Firth, whose Frances gradually emerges during this two-intermission play as the most complex character on the stage.

Their pas de deux is a beautiful study in conversations never had, or had too late. (How the 1955 Broadway production of this play ran only a few weeks, despite Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy in the roles, is a mystery.) But Hunter gave just about everyone in his story something substantive: old Uncle David (George Morfogen), who may or may not be taking in everything that's going on around him; the liquor-loving doctor (Philip Goodwin), who helps with David's care; the dowdy Miss Mathieson (Polly McKie), governess to Frances's children.

Miss Mathieson isn't around much, but what Ms. McKie does with her one big scene, a confessional moment of yearning, is heart-stopping. And it underscores that Hunter was not interested in simplicities. Frances and Julian didn't say enough to each other at a crucial time in their lives, and it may have cost them happiness. Miss Mathieson, in contrast, is as blunt and honest as can be, but is she rewarded for her openness? In Hunter's complex postwar world, apparently not.








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BONEAU/BRYAN-BROWN

Billboard

August 26, 2016

Cast Albums For The Week of September 3

Two Weeks	Last Week	This Week	Title, Artist Imprint label	RIAA certification	Peak Pos.	Weeks on Chart
1	1	1	 Hamilton: An American Musical Original Broadway Cast Hamilton Uptown/Atlantic AG		1	47
3	2	2	Wicked Original Broadway Cast Recording Decca Broadway/Verve VG	 	1	556
4	3	3	Waitress Original Broadway Cast Recording DMI Soundtracks		2	11
5	4	4	Beautiful: The Carole King Musical Original Broadway Cast Recording Ghostlight/Sh-K-Boom Razor & Tie		1	122
7	6	5	The Lion King Original Broadway Cast Recording Walt Disney	 	2	535
8	5	6	In The Heights Original Broadway Cast Recording Ghostlight/Sh-K-Boom Razor & Tie		1	166
11	8	7	The Phantom Of The Opera Original London Cast Recording Really Useful/Polydor/Verve VG		2	426
9	9	8	The Book Of Mormon Original Broadway Cast Recording Ghostlight/Sh-K-Boom Razor & Tie		1	275
6	10	9	The Color Purple The New Broadway Cast Recording Broadway Records		2	26
10	12	10	Something Rotten!: A Very New Musical Original Broadway Cast Recording Ghostlight/Sh-K-Boom Razor & Tie		1	64