

A *CurtainUp* Los Angeles Review

Lascivious Something

By [Laura Hitchcock](#)

Old love makes the ground beneath you slick. — Daphne<



Left to right: Alina Phelan, Olivia Henry, Silas Weir Mitchell
(Photo: Dawid Jaworski)

Though born in New Jersey, Sheila Callaghan shares all the characteristics of the Irish writers we view with shuddering awe: Conor Macpherson, Martin McDonagh, Martina Carr. Vivid language, panting eroticism, and a quarrelsome sense of the universe.

This one, in an outing by Circle X Theatre at Inside the Ford, takes place on a Greek island where August (Silas Weir Mitchell) has retreated to make wine and make breathless love to his pregnant bride, beautiful young Daphne (Olivia Henry). Complications promptly arise with the arrival of his last wife Liza (Alina Phelan), plain and 20 years older.

Daphne confides that the wine is bad but only to Liza, whom she frankly admits she does not trust. There's also Boy (Alana Dietze), an androgynous teen-ager who adores Daphne and whom August likes to watch make love to her, but not too far. Boy has a curious role. Daphne likes to mother her, in the vague maternal way she has with everyone. She can't understand why Liza and

August, who fling themselves in each other's arms, don't make love. Liza's willing. August drags his feet.

Maybe it's fear. Liza loves to bite and August veers uneasily between attraction and repulsion. We see why August hasn't seen her in over 14 years and the reason is appalling.

August has pared his life down to the essentials. Liza is a reminder of who he used to be in that complicated world beyond the sea. When she strips, she reveals a beautiful body and the reason for her journey.

The play takes place in 1980 on the day Ronald Reagan is elected President. The Reagan years hang like an ominous pall over the play's landscape. There's no escape, even on a Greek isle making bad wine.

Daphne is estranged from her family who live on the same island. She's brought August back and conceived his child partly out of longing for a reconciliation. When Liza buys her a smashing dress at the local shop, she is pleased as a child.

Callaghan finds the madness in each of her characters. It's not apparent but it's there, as it is in each of us. This gives the play its strength, as each of the characters is strong, too, and the three of them stubbornly fight to defend their turf. August is weak and unlikeable and, as played by Mitchell, imparts an eager buoyancy. Alina Phelan as Liza is harsh, demanding, gawky, and holds the stage. Olivia Henry's Daphne is sly and, in perfectly accented Greek, holds her own against Liza.

Paul Willis directs with a slashing sense of doom. Sibyl Wickersheimer designed the set, a rustic patio against the blue sky. Its peace is a cosmic rebuke to the raging lives of its people.

Lascivious Something

Playwright: Sheila Callaghan

Director: Paul Willis

Cast: August (Silas Weir Mitchell), Daphne (Olivia Henry), Liza (Alina Phelan), Boy (Alana Dietze)

Set Design: Sibyl Wickersheimer

Light Design: Tom Ontiveros

Sound Design: John Zalewski

Costume Design: Dianne K. Graebner

Prop Design: Alexandra Hisserich

Hair & Make-Up Design: Emily McDonald

Production Stage Manager: Justine Baldwin

Scenic Painting: Jen Kays

Dialect Coach: Dwight Bacquie

Running Time: Two hours with one intermission

Running Dates: March 27-May 1, 2010.

Where: Inside the Ford, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood. Reservations: (323) 461-3673. Reviewed by Laura Hitchcock on March 27