

Lascivious Something at Inside the Ford

Does true love bring serenity or a sucker punch? That's the dilemma of "Lascivious Something," Sheila Callaghan's darkly comic love triangle now at [Inside] the Ford.

With its rustic cottage, grape vines, and rolling dunes, Sibyl Wickersheimer's Greek island set looks ready for a sunny romp through a midlife crisis. But the doings here are more Dionysian. American expat August (Silas Weir Mitchell) prepares to celebrate his vineyard's first harvest with Daphne (Olivia Henry), his pregnant Greek wife. Enter Liza (Alina Phelan), an old flame — perhaps flamethrower might be a more accurate term — with an agenda and a secret. Cue catfights, heavy drinking and a dash of S&M with resident sex slave Boy (Alana Dietze).

Circle X's production is first-rate; under Paul Willis' sharp direction, the performances snap and crackle even when scenes feel overwritten. At her best, Callaghan has a keen sense of language as an act of aggression, and Daphne and Liza's sly tug of war over the rather idiotic August is like Noel Coward cranked up on ouzo. The show's theatricality rests on a single conceit: Key scenes are played twice, at very different emotional temperatures -- cool and white hot. It's an approach that is both compelling and limiting. For all its heavy breathing, "Lascivious" lacks dramatic velocity, its characters more marooned by feeling than propelled by it.

— Charlotte Stoudt



"Lascivious Something" [Inside] the Ford, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. E., Hollywood. 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sundays. Ends May 1. \$20. (323) 461-3673 or www.fordtheatres.org. Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes.

*Photo: Alina Phelan and Silas Weir Mitchell.
Credit: Dawid Jaworski.*