

## Lascivious Something

By Leigh Kennicott.



One has a distinctly Greek Island experience at Circle X's assured staging Sheila Callaghan's *Lascivious Something* as part of (Inside) The Ford's 2010 three-play season. Glaring yellow light washes over the setting, as a twinkling sea beckons the eye almost before feasting on a foregrounded grape arbor. It is enough to call down the ancient gods. And, although the characters in Callaghan's play seem most assuredly flesh and blood, we soon come to experience their same capricious behavior as the classical pantheon of Zeus.

What Eugene O'Neill long sought in his many experiments using psychological inner voices to reveal motivation, Callaghan has perfected here. The expert cast has the delicious opportunity to inhabit a truly accomplished play in a story that could only be told in layers. The realistic layer, we realize, portrays the inexplicable decline of August (Silas Weir Mitchell), an expatriot radical from Berkeley now a fledgling vintner in Greece where he has married a beautiful, self-absorbed Greek child, Daphne (Olivia Henry)

who has just learned she is pregnant. But the Athena-like Liza (Alina Phelan), a significant ex-girlfriend, strides into their idyllic lives. It appears she has tracked down August in order to deliver a shocking message. In an intricate dance between the three authentic –almost bestial– emotions bubble up to the surface from the lower depths of behavior.

From the first moments, Mitchell's August hugs his psyche close to the vest, as Phelan's Liza aggressively thrusts her way back into his life, as Henry's Daphne is too vain to notice that her safe life is now threatened. The three actors create a perfect symbiotic whole, while Alana Dietze as Boy orbits around them.

Callaghan's clever playwriting might have given a lesser director pause, but Paul Willis, who has directed her earlier plays, has achieved just the right balance making the most of the skills of lighting designer Tom Ontiveros and the sound mix of John Zalewski to separate one level of reality from another. Most telling is the ominous rumbling that accompanies their forays into the subconscious. The collective result reminds us how dependent we may be on the approbation of our loved ones for our psychological well-being. It is both unsettling and cathartic.

The rest of the production credits are excellent, with but one tiny false note: costume designer Dianne K. Graebner's \$3,000 dress looks more like \$29.99 at Ross.

*Lascivious Something* is part of a curated season of three plays at the John Anson Ford Theatres, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood 90068. It performs Thursday–Saturday at 8:00 P.M.; Sunday at 2:00 and 7:00 P.M. through May 1st.. Ticket prices from \$12.00 (students & seniors) to \$20.00. Sunday matinees are pay-what-you-can. For reservations phone (323) GO1-FORD or [www.FordTheatres.org](http://www.FordTheatres.org).