

Edge

NY

a magazine for independent theater

FRIDAY PROPAGANDA

DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVAL

Our first show this season, *The Hunger Waltz*, was accepted into the NYC Fringe Festival, where it received some outstanding praise:

The Hunger Waltz
Written by Sheila Callaghan.
Directed by Paul Angelo
Context

Sheila Callaghan's *The Hunger Waltz* is a wonderfully poignant drama in three acts. The desires and inter-dynamics of four characters are introduced in the 1800s of pre-revolution east-coast America, and reincarnated in Act II in the pre-depression 1930s American mid-west, and again in an futuristic pre-apocalyptic Los Angeles.

The desires of the characters are unchanged, however they are played out in three vastly different societies. Described as "the story of one woman's search for identity and empowerment"...the play goes much further than this in it's exploration of desire on several complex levels.

The cast of stellar actors, Jennifer Leigh Jones (Gwen), Don Carlson (Walter), Victoria Agresti (Beth) & Chris Sias (Greg) are all linked together by their inter-woven desires that play themselves out in similar ways and for similar reasons between the four of them.

But like the societies that they are all pre-destined to live in, they seem doomed to exist in a physical and emotional purgatory where there is no resolve for any of the four of them. Like a *Twilight Zone* episode, only social and personal revolution/depression or apocalypse can break the cycle.

Act III felt less intense than the first two Acts, however the playwright faced the challenge of creating a nether-world of the future, still humanly glued together (and easily un-glued) by the complexities of desire.

The cast (from New Ensemble Theatre Company) have a wonderful chemistry together. The relationship between the two women is fraught with burning desire & Victoria Agresti can say more with a glance than most people can with a Hallmark AND flowers.

Sheila Callaghan has woven together an wonderfully original piece of writing that takes both cast & audience on an emotional rollercoaster that seems to have no start or finish but one revels in the ride. I can't help but imagine that these character's reincarnations are still playing themselves out in other eras and even other solar systems.

The Hunger Waltz is one of those gemstones that make mining the New York Fringe Festival so exciting & wonderful.

—Szu Burgess