



BWW Review: HURRICANE DIANE at TRT- Relevant and Boldly Creative



by Marina Kennedy Jan. 31, 2017

Hurricane Diane, a World Premiere show, is now being performed at Two River Theater (TRT) through February 12th. Commissioned by TRT, this boldly creative theatrical piece is written by Pulitzer Prize Nominee Madeleine George and directed by Leigh Silverman. Performed in the Marion Huber Theater, it is a comedy with serious undertones that features a talented cast, choreography by Sonya Tayeh and original music by The Bengsons.

In Hurricane Diane, Greek God Dionysus comes to Red Bank as Diane, a lesbian permaculture gardener from Vermont. In the suburban setting, she meets some of the local women, Sandy, Renee, Pam, and Beth, a friendly foursome who live on the same cul de sac. Diane pitches plans to landscape all of their properties to become self-sustaining, natural habitats. And she is also intent on seducing each one of the women. Her strategies are met with opposition as not all of "the girls" are quick to accept Diane or her ideas. This fantastic imagining evokes concern about our damaged ecosystem against the backdrop of life in the suburbs. The show is a unique combination of Contemporary Theatre and elements from a Greek tragedy.

The accomplished cast brings Hurricane Diane to life on the Red Bank stage. They include Mia Barron as Sandy Fleishcher; Becca Blackwell as Diane; Nikiya Mathis as Renee Shapiro-Epps; Danielle Skraastad as Pam Annunziata; Kate Wetherhead as Beth Wann and Becca Blackwell as Diane. The actors capture the diverse personalities of their characters. There are humorous moments that include Sandy's obsession with HGTV magazine and Pam's desire for a garden with an Italian flair. But there's also the drama of Beth's separation, Renee's career conflicts, and Diane's deep desire to restore the environment.

The Creative Team for Hurricane Diane has done a great job of setting the mood for the show. They include musical direction by Matthew Dean Marsh; scenic design by Rachel Hauck; costume design by Kaye Voyce; lighting design by Jen Schriever and sound design by Bray Poor. The stage manager is Melanie J. Lisby.

Hurricane Diane is a distinctive production that is very relevant. And the focus on the local area makes the show all the more fascinating.

Hurricane Diane will be performed at Two River Theater in Red Bank through February 12th. For more information and ticketing, visit <http://www.tworivertheater.org/>.

Photo Credit: T. Charles Erickson