

GILROY DISPATCH

'Double Indemnity' is edgy suspense

By Camille Bounds

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Chris Bennion

Double Indemnity

Carrie Paff, as Phyllis Nirlinger, and John Bogar, as Walter Huff, in San Jose Rep's world premiere of the stage adaptation of "Double Indemnity."

'Double Indemnity'

Where: San Jose Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose

Through: Feb. 5

Tickets: \$29 - \$74

Details: (408) 367-7255 or visit www.sjrep.com.

James M. Cain's original 1935 novella "Double Indemnity" (the 1944 movie starred Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray) spun a tale of intrigue, adultery and murder. He was a master of edgy, noir and suspenseful plots like "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (the 1934 movie starred Lana Turner and John Garfield and the book was banned in Boston) and "Mildred Pierce" (the 1945 movie starred Joan Crawford and Zachary Scott).

In "Double Indemnity" you have a beautiful but psychotic siren and a know-it-all insurance salesman who join to murder her unsuspecting husband for an insurance payoff that doubles if the demise is met by accident.

Director Kurt Beattie and plot adapters David Pichette and R. Hamilton Wright followed dialogue and scenes from the book with dedication and exactness - and there's the rub. Dialogue did not seem to transpose well from the book to the final production. (If you see Billy Wilder's movie version with the screenplay Wilder wrote with Raymond Chandler, you will understand.)

Carrie Paff (Phyllis Nirlnger) carries the conniving seductress with just enough sting to make the audience squirm in their seats. John Bogar (Walter Huff) plays the insurance salesman with the blind arrogance of a man you know is going to trip and get caught in this evil web. A finely honed cast plays dual roles that enhance the production.

Thomas Lynch and Rick Paulsen bring creativity to their sets and lighting. Scenes change on a revolving stage without

interrupting the moment, and the lighting enhances the dark moods with murky precision.

"Double Indemnity" offers a suspenseful view of deception, betrayal and guilt that show how evil obsession will destroy everything in its path.