



THE WEIR at San Jose Rep



THE WEIR
by Conor McPherson
San Jose Rep
101 Paseo de San Antonio
San Jose, CA 95113-2003
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If you love stories and believe that the dead return again and again to share their wisdom and their insight with us, you will love THE WEIR by Conor McPherson. The play opens in a Dublin bar, where four lonely souls meet Valerie, a woman who has moved into the haunted house down the road. There is almost no action or plot in this production. The play is held together by the series of magical stories each character tells about his experiences with the mysterious ways of the supernatural and with life itself. "I first directed this play in its New England premier in 2002," said Artistic Director Rick Lombardo. "And it remains one of my most memorable theatrical experiences – lovely, haunting, poetic and funny, in the best possible way."

The beauty of this production is the language. McPherson is a word-artist and wants his sentences to paint clear pictures in people's heads. "I just want the actors to put their faith in the language," he says. "Just let the words do the work."

And his words do an excellent job of spelling out our human fear of ending up alone. "I guess I'm attracted and repelled by isolation," McPherson said. "It scares me. And it's why I tend to write about older characters, too, because for them the stakes are somewhat higher. You know, if you tell a person you're living with to go fuck themselves when you are 21, then you don't think too much of it; but if you say those same words near the end of your life, then the person goes and walks out on you – where are you then?"

As I listened to each one of these superb actors spin their tales at this perfect replica of a Dublin pub moving from the bar to the table near the fire, I was struck with how each person's story struck a responsive chord for all of us living our lives. Zilah Glory as Valerie was right on the mark, convincing, charming and real. She was eager and accepting of these three men, her new neighbors and slower than they to open up and tell her heartbreaking story of loss. She was a mother who had lost her child and her husband because of it. She didn't grieve, as we all did for her, but instead decided to force herself to make a new beginning in a new place. Jack (Robert Sicular) is the first to appear on stage in this charming and touching production and throughout he dominates the action. His story is the last one and I think I will never forget its poignancy. He tells of the woman he might have married and his immense sense of loss. He tells of his life now with all its good and bad and mourns the absence of anyone caring if he gets up in the morning or dies in bed. He described how touched he was when a stranger made him a sandwich because no one had ever done that kind of nurturing and caring act just for him before. Suddenly the audience realized what it really is to live alone and know you are the only reason you are remaining alive..... and you wonder with Jack if that is enough. Is it safe to wait for the "right one" if the right one never appears? Is mediocrity better than nothing at all?

It was amazing and thrilling for me to sit mesmerized for almost two hours while these masterful storytellers took me on their journeys of love, hope, fear and fantasy. There was a stillness to this play, a gentle thoughtfulness that was beautiful on every level. "The play is really three generations of Dublin men talking about how they face up to the responsibility of emotion," said McPherson. "The three men could be related; they could be the same person. I don't know..."

The Weir is an experience you cannot forget and no summary can weave the spell these five people create as they sit at a bar, gradually sharing more and more of themselves with one another and with an audience who hears echoes of themselves in every word.

IF YOU GO:

THE WEIR continues until February 21, 2010
Tickets: www.SJRep.com or 408 367 7255

[Sunday, January 31, 2010](#)