

# Two incredible performances in *The Dresser* render this writer speechless

By [Cynthia Corral](#)

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Ken Ruta in "The Dresser"

Show reviews usually write themselves. "Great show, great acting, beautiful scenery/costumes/etc, Go see it!"

Occasionally the shows are not great and the reviews are more difficult to write. But it is very, very seldom that we see a show that is just too spectacular for words.

[\*The Dresser\*](#), currently at the **San Jose Repertory Theatre**, is one of these shows. I don't know where to start! This is one magical presentation. Throughout the show I just kept whispering in my mind, "Stupendous!"

It's a show about the theatre, but like every great production, it is also about so much else. Taking place during World War II, it focuses on Sir, an aging actor getting ready for his 227th performance as King Lear, and his "dresser", Norman. What takes place in the dressing room is more than preparations for a performance, it is the story of a lifelong friendship, it is the end of one man's career and maybe his life, and this will signal the end of life as he knows it for another man. The story of King Lear plays out right here in the dressing room, in a serious, touching, heartbreaking and yet comedic two hours. It is also the story of the show still going on, of lifetime performances continuing into the afterlife, of human beings never giving up.



James Carpenter as Norman, Ken Ruta as Sir.

What raises this production above so many others are the performances by the two stars, **Ken Ruta** and **James Carpenter**. There is no doubt as you sit in the audience that you are watching something special, something magical, something very important. Describing these two are where I lose my words, because nothing I say can do them justice. Please take my silence in this section as my highest reverence to them both. Their performances simply rendered me speechless.

If you love theatre, if you love Shakespeare, if you love stories of intense human will and integrity and pressing on through life

while always giving the best you have to give, this is the show for you. If you want to witness something magical, this is the show for you.

Playing through February 20 at the San Jose Repertory – word is getting around fast and this show will be sold out soon, so plan to get your tickets quickly.

**[THE DRESSER](#)**

**San Jose Repertory Theatre**

Tickets: <http://tickets.sjrep.com/calendar/index.aspx>

\$10 Student tickets for Tuesdays, and Wednesday matinees



Ensemble prepares to perform "King Lear"