

Theater Review

Darwin in Malibu surfs on rough waters at Falcon Theater



Mother and Daughter Team Shine in NoHo

Arts marketing duo making their mark in the east valley

Habitat for Humanity honors McCarthy and Hertzberg

INSIDE

...when one was perhaps craving something deeper.

Lights go up on an idyllic and sunny scene; the back porch of a beach side cottage. Decked out in Hawaiian shirt, shorts and sunglasses, silver-bearded Darwin (Robert Foxworth) is sunning himself and perusing a trashy novel. His companion is a young Southern Californian beach babe (Rebecca Brooksher); a blonde in bare feet, wearing cut-off denim shorts and a pink tank top. While she predictably peppers her dialogue with the over-use of "like," Brooksher's line readings seemed a bit unnatural at times, as if she hasn't quite settled into her role just yet. The two appear to be enjoying some sort of eternal vacation together, with their relaxed and easy banter. Darwin appears to be fascinated by the "specimens" down on the beach. "Who needs evolution when you can have plastic surgery?" he quips.

A visitor drops in. It's Thomas Huxley (Granville Van Dusen), an old mate of Darwin's from way back. They reminisce about the past 100 years and the furor that Darwin's groundbreaking book (The Origin of the Species – the

...Bishop) the Bishop is determined to make the other two repent their wrong-headed theories, to bring them to God, and thence to Heaven.

Lively debates ensue, but always in a light-hearted fashion. When Van Dusen as Huxley exploded with a rant against blind faith, the banana and the giraffe speech, his passion drew applause.

Other than that, *Darwin in Malibu* proved little more than a light-hearted discussion, skirting the serious issues in favor of lightweight entertainment.

Please be aware there is a brief scene involving the smoking of a presumably illegal substance towards the end of the play. Due to the play's highly controversial and topical themes and issues, the Falcon will also host a Tuesday Night Forum immediately following each Tuesday night's performance for audience members who wish to discuss the play with the cast. ✨

Darwin in Malibu at the Falcon Theater, located at 4252 Riverside Drive, Burbank. Box office and bookings – (818) 955 8101 (<http://www.falcontheatre.com/darwin.htm>). Tuesdays – Saturdays at 8pm; Sundays at 4pm through May 21 \$25.00 - \$37.50.

Theater Review

Actors at play in North Hollywood



Slow...Children at Play brings out "kid" energy.

BY KAREN A. LEFKOWITZ

They make it look so easy, don't they? Actors taking creative license, often pushing the envelope as an improv forum allows them to have fun taking risks, flexing muscles and playing off one another with belly laughing results.

Guessing games, inventing characters, and acting out skits sound like child's play, yes? Hence the name *Slow...Children at Play*, a NoHo based improvisation group that's the brainchild of actor/director/producer Tim Simek, who's been involved in "improv" for 14 years.

What started as a handful of actor friends meeting weekly in an apartment has morphed into a full-fledged troupe of improv experts and novice performers who meet regularly to practice and perform.

No professional acting aspirations? Not a problem. Simek explains improv is great for performers and non-performers alike. "A person doesn't need an acting background...just the willingness to learn, play, laugh and have the desire to explore many aspects of themselves."

Slow...Children at Play consists of two groups: The Core is the main cast of seasoned actors, while The Deuce is filled with newer performers. Both groups engage in a variety of short form improv games such as One Minute Scene, Entrances and Exits, Day in the Life, and Commercial Challenge. Taking suggestions from the audience, the cast will create several stand-alone scenes on the spot, using just their imagination.

Simek and co-director Laura Buckles conduct classes in their NoHo theater. Starting off with trust and bond-

ing exercises to get students feeling comfortable, the class later segues into spontaneous games and exercises. "It's tapping into their 'kid' energies," says Simek, who cites the benefits of improv as "innumerable."

"For actors, improv helps in developing stronger focus and listening skills, builds confidence for auditions, and creates a better understanding of ensemble work," Simek states, also noting the general benefits of "enhanced concentration, focus, and a stronger development of sensory skills, trust, spontaneity and overall stress relief."

Blake Adamson, a voice-over artist says, "Improv has really helped me to overcome a fear of public speaking. (It's) helped me in my career, when I have to go into the booth and create a character through my voice."

Improver Chris Nee cites the "escape from reality" that improve affords, while actress Jackie Madjerian says she loves the "freedom and play with little structure."

It seems the old adage may be true. Comedy is the best medicine. ✨

For more information about attending classes and performances visit www.slowchildrenimprov.com or call (818) 410-PLAY.

Slow...Children at Play performing at the Andrew Benne Studio. 4930 Lankershim Blvd. North Hollywood, CA Friday, May 12 - The Core performs at 8 p.m., Tickets: \$10. Saturday, May 13- The Deuce at 6 p.m., Tickets: \$8 The Core at 8 p.m., Tickets: \$10. Tickets can be purchased at the box office or via email: tickets@slowchildrenimprov.com