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The Force of Change

by Shirley Prince

When the only civil strife that we hear on the news today is one involving the Iraq war, it is hard to forget the struggles that continue in Northern Ireland. One play that wants to bring these continuing difficulties to the forefront is Closet Space Theatre's U.S. premiere of the production "The Force of Change", now playing at the McCadden Place Theatre.

Written by award winning playwright Gary Mitchell, this weighty drama takes place in the year 2000 in a Belfast police station where Caroline, a detective superbly portrayed by Peggy Goss, fights against the forces of corruption, and the defensiveness of her co-workers to uncover the truth behind the criminal activities of the UDA (Ulster Defence Association). Caroline is frustrated by UDA gangster Stanley (portrayed effectively by Rick Crawford), whose silence is maddening to her efforts.

Caroline's efforts becomes stymied by the unhelpfulness of her partner Bill, (portrayed passionately by Barry Lynch), who has a personal resistance to not helping Caroline with the investigation. In another scene, two detectives Mark, (John Montana) and David (Kevin Kearns) have to question an uncooperative young man named Rabbit (Brandan Halpin) to try and extract information about Stanley.

Both Montana and Kearns bring a zealous sharpness in their performances as they question the apathetic Rabbit. Halpin plays Rabbit with a convincing edge that makes his performance notable.

Set Designer Russ Borski's drab interrogation room with solitary table and chairs is effective in assisting the dialogue in its legitimacy and setting the somber mood of the subject matter. Music Supervisor Wilson Tai uses the sound of a rapidly ticking clock as a successful time bridge between scenes.

In addition, Director John Swanbeck, who makes his Los Angeles directorial stage debut, makes the subject matter more comprehensible with his fluid transition of each scene and dramatic staging.

Regarding the continuing social strife of Northern Ireland, this production is most certainly an eye opener. This play, for mature audiences, will certainly give you food for thought on the civil condition throughout the world.

RECOMMENDED