



BWW Review: Swear to God! *THE DEVIL'S WIFE*'s Wickedly Good!

by Gil Kaan Jul. 17, 2017 [Photos removed]

THE DEVIL'S WIFE/by Tom Jacobson/ directed by Eric Hoff/ Skylight Theatre

The Skylight Theatre Company's world premiere of *THE DEVIL'S WIFE* scores high on all fronts - Tom Jacobson's witty script (with a message), spot-on delivery by its talented cast of four, smooth direction by Eric Hoff, all complemented by Skylight Theatre team's first-rate technical elements. *THE DEVIL'S WIFE*'s certainly one of the **more successful Original (capital 'O' emphasized) theatre pieces I've seen over the years**

The three Ramirez sisters have just arrived home from their father's funeral. Their dire situation of their just inherited thousands of acreage with no financial means to maintain it vividly presents itself, along with simultaneously introducing the various distinct character traits of the three sisters. Mariel Neto's effortlessly glides through her portrayal of the so confident/not confident Bonita, the oldest sister and the beautiful one. Alana Dietze easily seduces the male interloper (and the audience) as Dulce, the sweet sibling. Caro Zeller commandingly embodies her role of the responsible Sofia, the clever sister.

Sofia has taken it upon herself to call on a solicitor to assist the Ramirez sisters in remedying their financial condition. Enter smooth-talking lawyer Nicolas Mastema, as slickly limned by Everette Wallin. This first meeting of Sofia and Nicolas overflows with seduction pheromones as the sexual attraction/flirtation's hotly palpable. Zeller and Wallin have major sparks together! **SSSizzling!**

Nicolas' anxious and timely offer of legal aid ever-so-thinly masks his agenda of personal gratification as his first proposal involves marrying one of the Ramirez sisters, using a parcel of the acreage as dowry, and thereby, 'keeping' all the property in the Ramirez family.

Wallin adeptly does double-time donning a full-beard and an extremely slouched-over posture as Nicolas' lone servant Ratel, the straight-forward, truth (only) -speaking confidant to the sisters.

Although the program lists the time as 'The Present,' this story oozes a period feel with flickering chandeliers and stripped-down Victorian furnishings of Stephanie Kerley-Schwartz versatile, multi-use set, and costume designer Sarah Figoten Wilson's eye-catching Victorian dresses and corsets for the sisters and the Count Dracula-ish attire of the scheming Nicolas. Only Jacobson's snappy puns and double entendres suggest modern day idioms and values. But it all works very nicely together in this **mythical tale**, with the Devil as a real character.

Sound designer Christopher Moscatiello has a great field day with his effective assortment of fantastic sound effects (rain, lightning, hell). Jeff McLaughlin's lighting punctuates the scene/locale changes while maintaining a somber, creepy mood throughout.

Mike Mahaffey's fight choreography sequence receives amazingly, convincing execution from Zeller and Wallin - on par as one of the best two-person fights I've seen on the Los Angeles stage. Kudos to Mahaffey, Zeller and Wallin.

The synchronized staging frequently on view in *THE DEVIL'S WIFE* should be an added credit to director Hoff. The timing of the various moves from the cast seem organically choreographed, without being realistically distracting (i.e., the sisters helping each other undress; the sexual calisthenics of Nicolas and a Ramirez sister).

Go see if *THE DEVIL'S WIFE* will make you a believer in God. Or the Devil?

Check out my interview with playwright Tom Jacobson for his earlier play *CAPTAIN OF THE BIBLE QUIZ TEAM* [here](#).

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