

March 6, 2008

Nuanced direction brings out poignance in 'American Plan'

ANNE MARIE WELSH
FOR THE NORTH COUNTY TIMES

"Happiness exists. But it's for other people."

Imagine a mother singing that sentiment to her only child, and you'll begin to know the sorrow at the heart of Richard Greenberg's "The American Plan."

First produced by Manhattan Theater Club in 1990, this strange, wistful tragicomedy is only now getting its West Coast premiere in a sensitively directed staging by Kim Rubinstein at the Old Globe. Though the script is an odd mix of fairy tale, poetic realism and social satire, with a meandering second act, "The American Plan" explores themes that haunt Greenberg's later work and have made the prolific playwright such an important and distinctive contemporary voice.

In this early play, there's the bracing literate wit, the exploration of sexual and class roles, even the flashes of skin that made a populist hit of Greenberg's naked-boys baseball comedy, "Take Me Out" (2002). But there's also the deeper fascination with the legacy of parents, the fluidity of identity, and time — and its ravages — that saturated "The Violet Hour" and "Three Days of Rain," both

REVIEW

"The American Plan"

When: 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 8 p.m. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; through March 30

Where: Cassius Carter Centre Stage, Old Globe Theatre complex, Balboa Park, San Diego

Tickets: \$42-\$59

Info: (619) 234-5623

Web: www.theoldglobe.org

seen previously at the Globe.

And in Rubinstein's staging, "The American Plan" trembles with a melancholy that makes even the manipulative mother, Eva, who warped her daughter with that fearsome lullaby, almost understandable.

The year is 1960; the place, a lakeside facing a typically middle-class Jewish resort in the Catskills. Rubinstein and designer Wilson Chin open their production in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage with a splash — literally.

While a pretty, long-haired girl lolls about, a handsome stranger emerges bare-chested from the lake. Lili Adler, a Sarah Lawrence dropout, is Jewish, the fey daughter, we learn, of wealthy Eastern Europeans who got out just before the SS closed in. Lili's buff merman is Nick, the mysterious WASP son of a suburban Connecticut businessman.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Patrick Zeller and Kate Arrington star in "The American Plan."

For much of the action, Nick (Patrick Zeller) plays the gentleman caller, raising hopes that fragile, fanciful, yet fierce Lili (Kate Arrington) can escape the clutches of her controlling mother. Such resonances from "The Glass Menagerie" are textured with sharp observations about prejudice, assimilation and conformity. Certain of her cultural superiority, for instance, Eva views the middle-class Jews across the lake from her summer house as far beneath her — and Nick as a two-bit American dreamer whose lies she will expose so she can control him.

Throughout the first act, Sandra Shipley brings to Eva an alert, witchlike malevo-

lence. She's as manipulative as the Mam in Martin McDonagh's "The Beauty Queen of Leenane," though with a shrewd eloquence and smooth elegance that take the breath away. Shipley's erect posture, classy clothes, beautiful skin and blood-red nails create the image of a woman who equates superior grooming with superior morals.

The lovely chime of her thickly accented voice and the gracious openness of her manners are a culturally determined mask, though now and again Shipley can briefly seduce even the audience into believing that this angry, widowed Holocaust victim-turned-victimizer may have her troubled daughter's best interests at heart.

Arrington, the Chicago actor who made a strong impression at the Globe with her comic skill in "Hold, Please," here creates a bizarrely complicated, mood-swinging beauty who throws herself at Nick and at the possibility of love with authentic passion. We're never quite sure how crazy she is, or for that matter, how honest he is being in his intensifying desire for her.

Though Zeller doesn't look right for the romantic aspects of the part, he's potent and moving when Eva unmasks Nick's denials about his father, his profession and his sexual confusion. Zeller projects that ambivalence even more forcefully in scenes with a former love who has tracked him to this mountain hide-away.

None of these characters, seen at the end of the Eisenhower era before the upheavals of the next decade, fits precisely into anyone's "American Plan." Each struggles between keeping up appearances and breaking free.

Greenberg complicates their dynamic too much in the second act; the action becomes long and discursive, leapfrogging through improbable machinations as Eva spins the web of deceptions designed to trap the three youngsters like so much prey.

These scenes introduce a relaxed young actor of exceptional promise, Michael Kirby. He plays Nick's friend Gil Harbison as a true WASP, blond and seemingly bland, and sucked in by the blandishments of Eva, who conspires to use his desires for their mutual nefarious purposes.

Watching all this with a kind of sardonic resignation is Olivia (Sharon Hope), the Adler family's black maid. She's a kind of retainer who serves the tea, but then also sits down to sip it, while playing sounding board to Eva and spy (or better mother?) to Lili.

The final scene — beautifully staged in a pool of light and movingly enacted by Arrington and Zeller — occurs 10 years later, when Nick arrives, hoping for a kind of absolution. Time never brings happily-ever-after endings to Greenberg characters, however. Instead, in the moment when Lili acknowledges her passion and pain, Nick must confront his failure to build anything vaguely resembling a satisfactory life.

In this brief coda, Arrington's lost Lili flickers free for a moment, before extinguishing herself in her mother's shadow. The final scene redirec[t]s the play inward after too many bumpy second-act detours. In the production's heartbreaking final image, this once-upon-a-time prince and princess stand face to face, mournfully mute, each knowing full well that happiness exists, but only for "other people."

THEATER REVIEW

Love, hunger served in complicated 'Plan'

By CHARLES McNULTY
Times Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO — Sickeningly rich food serves as a central metaphor for "The American Plan," Richard Greenberg's somber 1990 comedy about American outsiders incapable of filling themselves up in a culture of ravenous appetites.

Set in the Catskills in 1960, the play — which is receiving its West Coast premiere at the Old Globe in a production that can't quite make sense of all the convoluted action — features much conversation about the grotesquely elaborate buffets around which guests organize their days. Eva (Sandra Shipley), a wealthy German-Jew émigré who owns an estate opposite one of the buster hotels, looks down her nose at the

gluttonous company she's occasionally forced to keep.

In an escalating verbal aria that's classic Greenberg, Eva — described by her daughter, Lili (Kate Arrington), as a "looming, late-Ibsenesque figure" with mah-jongg tiles — expatiates on the unfortunate sight of her friend Libby Kahkstein gorging herself at dinner. The litany of this voracious woman's crimes include packing five pats of butter into her baked potato, piling up infinite numbers of buttered rolls and "using every ounce of energy available to her simply to transport her laden bulk" to the dessert table.

No wonder Lili, a bright yet psychologically scarred young woman, refuses the breakfast that her mother's African

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Photographs by CRAID SCHWARTZ The Old Globe
MEN OF MYSTERY: Patrick Zeller, left, and Michael Kirby star in the West Coast premiere of Richard Greenberg's "The American Plan" at the Old Globe in San Diego's Balboa Park.

Relationship issues piled high in 'Plan'

[Theater, from Page E1]

American maid and confidant, Olivia (Sharon Hope), has prepared for her. Lili has her eye instead on another tasty treat — Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller), a dreamy magazine writer who has turned up on her lakefront property in his bathing trunks and ignited her romantic fantasies of escape.

A Connecticut WASP who acts as though he's slipped out of an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel, Nick is treated as an anomaly in the largely Jewish Catskills. He's the guest of his girlfriend's father — a man (Libby's husband, as it happens) who supposedly "pioneered broadloom in central New Jersey."

Nick admits that he's had enough of the resort's calorically explosive "American plan" — "the breakfasts and the lunches and the dinners and the coffees and the teas and the snacks and the hardly any exercise in between." And because neither he nor Lili feels at home in these surroundings (or anywhere, for that matter), their love flowers faster than it otherwise might.

Lili's biggest concern is her mother. Eva is a notorious meddler who, under the guise of looking after her unbalanced daughter, is determined to control her. Above all, she doesn't want Lili to fall victim to the predatory types she believes brought her inventor husband to an early death.

The literary influences peering through Greenberg's play are many, but the triangle — which later becomes a square when the mysterious and dashing Gil Harbison (Michael Kirby) enters the picture to sexually confuse the situation — is especially redolent of Henry James. Ethnic comedy wasn't exactly James' specialty, but he was a master at creating characters who are as confounded by their own ambivalent minds as they are by the fuzzy motivations and morals of those around them.

Love and money are as intertwined in "The American Plan" as they are in "Washington Square." Nothing is black and white — though green, naturally, is the color of all transactions.

Nick may be a masquerading phony, but he's not simply a fraud. Eva, who escaped Hitler with her husband on the "last boat out," is a monster with a sorry history. She's also more



ROMANCE: Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller) and Lili Adler (Kate Arrington) find love between the lavish buffet meals.

'The American Plan'

Where: Cassius Carter Center Stage, the Old Globe, Balboa Park, San Diego

When: 7 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays

Ends: March 30

Price: \$42 to \$59

Contact: (619) 23-GLOBE

Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes

"intellectually robust" (to borrow one of her prized distinctions) than her daughter, whose vulnerability is compounded by her inability to outmatch her mother in a game of intrigue that, truth be told, is overloaded and not always convincing.

Greenberg seems afflicted here with restless plot syndrome. The preliminary conflicts he sets up would have satisfied most playwrights, but he piles more and more on his characters' plates, like Libby Kahkstein at her nightly buffet.

The actors, under the direction of Kim Rubinstein, have only mixed success in coping with the rapidly shifting ground of their story. Zeller does a reasonably good job of revealing Nick's double-sided nature. We may never crack his blank mystery, but we understand the genuineness of his seductive appeal.

As Lili, Arrington whines more than is necessary, but you can see how her wounded eccentricity could captivate a guy who prides himself on making women happy. What's less clear is why her mother wants her to be utterly dependent. Lili is the kind of high-strung daughter you'd bribe every matchmaker in the Catskills to find a husband to unload her on.

A side note: Arrington is pregnant. Baggy outfits keep this from becoming too obvious (Emily Pepper's costumes, incidentally, are splendid all around), but it can be distracting when she flings herself after Nick, sometimes falling hard on the grass of Wilson Chin's elegant backyard set.

Shipley sharply delivers Eva's categorical pronouncements. This is a woman who doesn't just offer opinions — she airdrops edicts. If she can't help coming off like a soap opera villain, at least she boldly spices the comedy with Old World pungency.

Hope lends Olivia a quiet dignity, though the character is as underdeveloped as Gil, the other attractive male who turns up uninvited at Eva and Lili's summer home. Kirby's jittery performance makes it hard to trust the bombshell he drops about Nick's past.

What's Greenberg driving at with all this *meshugas*? "Happiness exists," Lili observes. "But it's for other people."

It's a neat way of summarizing this overly manipulative tale.

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THEATER REVIEW

'Plan' gets nuanced staging at Globe

By James Hebert
ARTS WRITER

It opens with a splashy little visual surprise, and closes with an exquisitely wistful image, like a bouquet of woe.

In between, the Old Globe's production of "The American Plan" is a delicate chamber piece, played in keys of yearning, resignation and understated humor, with characters who've been all but swallowed by their own deceptions and inventions.

Kim Rubinstein's expertly nuanced direction of the Richard Greenberg play breathes life into his arid and erudite dialogue, and she brings an almost painterly aspect to the staging. (Andrew Wyeth could claim copyright on the way Kate Arrington, as Lili Adler, drapes herself along a footbridge.)

The play, which opened Thursday in its West Coast premiere, takes after its characters by keeping a few secrets of its own. Lili in particular remains a mystery, and



Nick (Patrick Zeller) and Lili (Kate Arrington) find common ground on a Catskills shoreline in "The American Plan." *Craig Schwartz*

the work's pervasive sense of ambiguity risks letting the whole thing float away.

But a series of smartly crafted plot turns and a talented, cohesive cast keep the theater-in-the-round production mostly intriguing and

involving.

Although "The American Plan" is set at a Catskills resort in 1960, the tragic and beautiful Lili feels like a figure out of Faulkner. At its

SEE 'Plan,' E11

'PLAN'
CONTINUED FROM E1.
**Globe production
is a delicate
chamber piece**

best. Arrington's portrayal is haunting, an unsettling interplay of languid grace and desperation edged with madness.

Lily is a 20-ish Jewish woman who seems arrested in girlhood, both closely attached to and bitterly resentful of her imperious, pathologically protective mom, Eva (Sandra Shipley).

"The world has a wish of its own for you," is Eva's response to those who venture optimistic thoughts. "And it isn't good."

She comes by this paranoia the hard way, having made a last-minute escape by boat before the darkness of the Third Reich closed over Germany. Eva talks cryptically of the persecution endured by Lily's father, an episode that seems central to the state of this damaged family, though it's never completely detailed.

Shipley is marvelously haughty as Eva, whose genteel bearing masks a fierce compulsion for control. Eva has a penchant for combining the ridiculous and the dismissive — "I do not believe in the sea," she says at one point — and the helpless.

Lily has inherited her terror of water.

That aquatic motif flows through the narrative — and through Wilson Chin's inviting and inventive set, which includes a small pond edged by an expanse of grass that looks reasonably real.

It's summer, and the Adlers are ensconced at their lakefront compound, safely across the water from the uncultured masses whom Eva loves (maybe lives) to sniff at.

When the dashing young stranger Nick (Patrick Zeller) bumbles onto their shores, Lily is smitten, and even Eva seems disarmed, inviting him to tea and regaling him with tales of her ongoing affair with the architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Soon enough, though, Eva is picking away at Nick's story of being a correspondent for *Time* magazine, while Lily has already grown distressingly possessive, skipping rope while singing a ditty of her and Nick

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r them exc

DETAILS
"The American Plan"

When: Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Thursdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m.; through March 30.

Where: Old Globe Theatre's Cassius Carter Centre Stage, Balboa Park

Tickets: \$42-\$59
Phone: (619) 234-5623

Online: oldglobe.org

and "a baby in a baby carriage." (For the record, this is the second straight show that has showcased rope-jumping on the Carter stage, after the boxing drama "In This Corner." It's just a matter of time before the Globe hires a rope wrangler.)

Watching all this with a resigned, wry eye is the family's longtime, long-suffering governess, Olivia, played with dry wit by Sharon Hope.

Zeller proves good at shifting

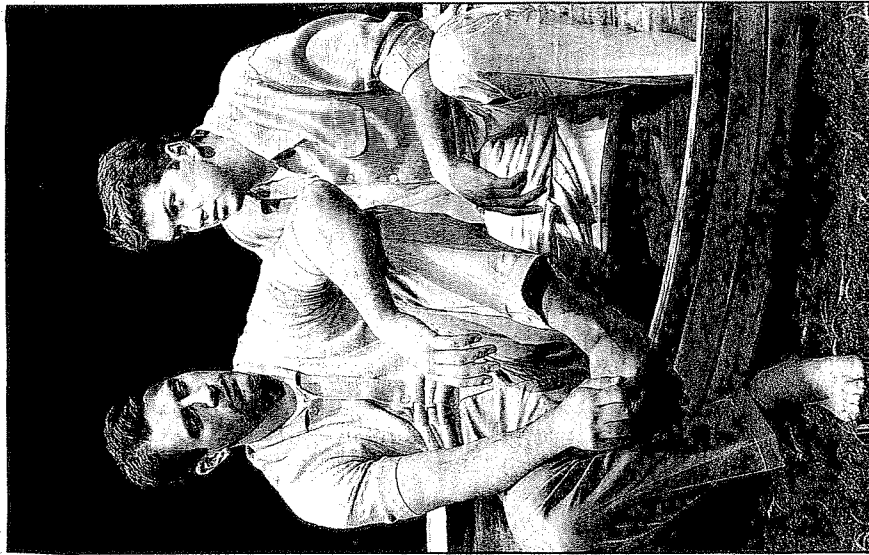
Nick's emotional tone as the layers of his history are peeled away. The real upheaval in the play's dynamic, though, comes with the arrival of yet another apparently accidental guest, Gil (an appealing Michael Kirby), who fills in plenty more of Nick's past.

Although the play's conclusion feels glommed a little awkwardly onto a backdrop of 1960s social protest, Greenberg still lends it a sense of the inevitable, of the weight of emotional inheritance.

"It's such a relief to find your place in life, don't you think?" says Lily, and it sounds like a pitiful proclamation of surrender.

Writer: Richard Greenberg. **Director:** Kim Rubinstein. **Sets:** Wilson Chin. **Lighting:** Chris Ryne. **Costumes:** Emily Popper. **Sound:** Paul Peterson. **Cast:** Kate Arrington, Sandra Shipley, Patrick Zeller, Sharon Hope, Michael Kirby.

James Hebert: (619) 293-2040; jim.hebert@uniontrib.com



Nick (Patrick Zeller, left) and Gil (Michael Kirby) find themselves adrift amid early-'60s social expectations in "The American Plan," at the Old Globe Theatre. *Craig Schwartz*

Sunday, March 2, 2008

At the Old Globe, "The American Plan" reveals a young playwright's career plan

An early Greenberg play gets a thoughtful production in San Diego

By **PAUL HODGINS**

The Orange County Register

"I'm planning to be an architect," the handsome young man says to the woman he's just met. She smiles and responds, "Everyone has pipe dreams."

Ouch! This wicked brand of verbal pinpricking – from a perfect stranger, no less! – could come from the pen of only one playwright: Richard Greenberg.

"The American Plan," which opened last week in a tart, appealing production at San Diego's Old Globe, is one of the few Greenberg plays to have escaped the attention of Costa Mesa's South Coast Repertory. Old Globe co-artistic director Jerry Patch acknowledged that producing the play was always a vague intention during his years at SCR, but the Tony-winning playwright's continuous parade of world premieres in Costa Mesa somehow kept pushing it to the back burner.

Too bad. "The American Plan," written near the beginning of the playwright's career in 1990, fits nicely into Greenberg's thematic continuum. Set in the Catskills in 1960, it's more personal and less grandly ambitious than slightly later plays such as "Night and Her Stars" and "Three Days of Rain," and it retains a slightly post-conservatory feel. Some scenes go on a bit longer than they should; some speeches seem a little too blatantly character-revealing; the plot is a little too tidy.

Still, you'll recognize a lot of Greenberg's strengths in this story about an overbearing German-Jewish woman, her stifled, yearning daughter and the man who insinuates himself into their lives.

Some might claim that Greenberg has recreated "The Glass Menagerie" as an urban


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Jewish cautionary tale, and Greenberg does explore some of the same delicate issues that Tennessee Williams did. Lili Adler (Kate Arrington) has been overprotected by her mother Eva (Sandra Shipley), a damaged but domineering matriarch in a man-less household. Like the Wingfields, the Adlers tiptoe around the yawning chasm left by an absent husband and father whose departure is surrounded by an unspoken and hurtful story. But there's one big difference between the two families: the Adlers are rich. Stinking rich.

Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller) certainly fills the role of the handsome and charming gentleman caller. When he flops into Lili's world one sultry summer day (quite literally: he emerges from the water and makes himself comfortable in the front yard of the Adlers' lakeside mansion while Lili spies on him from behind the garden furniture), he soon rouses our suspicions. Lili has been admiring Nick from afar – he's been staying at a resort on the other side of the lake – but as we and the Adlers get to know him, and Nick's romance with Lili begins to take hold, his attractive, vaguely patrician persona doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Why is he on such a lengthy vacation from his job as a Time magazine journalist? And why is a goy like Nick putting up with a fish-out-of-water experience at a tacky Catskills resort?

The withering examination of Nick's biographical claims comes mainly from Eva. She doesn't trust the smooth young man, whose romance with her daughter quickly turns into an engagement. "He's the sort who takes what's yours and then behaves as if it were his own," she says darkly.

The play's second act is packed – perhaps a little too densely – with plot twists that confirm Eva's worst suspicions about her son-in-law-to-be. But rather than reveal all of her knowledge to her head-strong daughter, Eva plots to use it cunningly, in a way that she knows will cause maximum damage to Lili's budding romance. Lili has made a lifetime project out of disobeying her mother's commands and suggestions, Eva confides to her maid, the long-suffering and all-knowing Olivia (Sharon Hope). The only way to stop Nick's plans is through subterfuge.

As in many of his later plays, Greenberg has created an irresistible series of situational dissonances. The best of them concerns the Adlers' inconveniently located summer home. As a well-heeled German-American Jew, Eva feels she has nothing in common with the rabble across the lake at the working-class Jewish resort. "We must suffer proximity to some of the country's most comical misfits," she complains.

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You'll also recognize some Greenbergian archetypes here. Lili, particularly, owns the same brilliant but eccentric misfit quality as the main characters in "Hurrah at Last," "The Dazzle" and other Greenberg plays.

Director Kim Rubinstein has tackled this script before, and she knows how to make her actors balance their characters' simultaneously revealing and deceptive qualities. She and scenic designer Wilson Chin have gone to ingenious lengths to satisfy the challenges of the Cassius Carter's in-the-round stage.

Zeller's Nick is maybe a bit too sunny and glib to be plausible as a man carrying such a large load of concealed baggage.

The women, though, are superb.

From her first, tentative entrance, we can tell that Arrington's Lili is a handful: bright, conflicted and crammed with erudition, feverish thoughts and neuroses that can find no outlet. As Eva, Shipley captures a beguiling and complicated mix of warmth, snobbery, deep hurt and world-class connivance. It's quite a show. Playing Olivia, the longtime family servant who knows exactly where the bodies are buried, Hope brings a cryptic knowingness and unspoken pain to a fascinating but underwritten part.

Is "The American Plan" essential Greenberg? Probably not. But if you're one of the many fans who have been lucky enough to follow the playwright's development over the last decade through his frequent South Coast Rep appearances, this is a production that will fill in some blanks – and satisfy your hankering for that bracing, inimitable Greenberg dialogue.

Contact the writer: 714-796-7979 or phodgins@ocregister.com

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Theater goes crazy (times three)

by Jean Lowerison

'The American Plan'

How old are you when it's too late to start being happy?" asks the 20-something Lili (Kate Arrington) plaintively.

The maid Olivia (Sharon Hope) answers "35" but the real answer seems to be "whatever age you are" for this bunch of droopy, bored and/or crazy characters in the Catskills, some on holiday.

Lili is there with her autocratic German-accented mother Eva (Sandra Shipley), she of the "looming late Ibsenesque figure," gobbs of money and a mean streak the size of Texas. They live in the imposing family home across the lake from the Borscht Belt hotels.

Lili has walked out on the pier when a waterlogged Adonis named Nick (Patrick Zeller), unaware this is private property, pulls himself out of the water. Conversation ensues ("I like the way you look," says Lili, "like nothing ever happened to you.") and romance will inevitably follow, though we will soon find out that very little is as it appears in this universe.

Richard Greenberg's *The American Plan* plays through March 30 at the Old Globe's Cassius Carter Centre Stage,

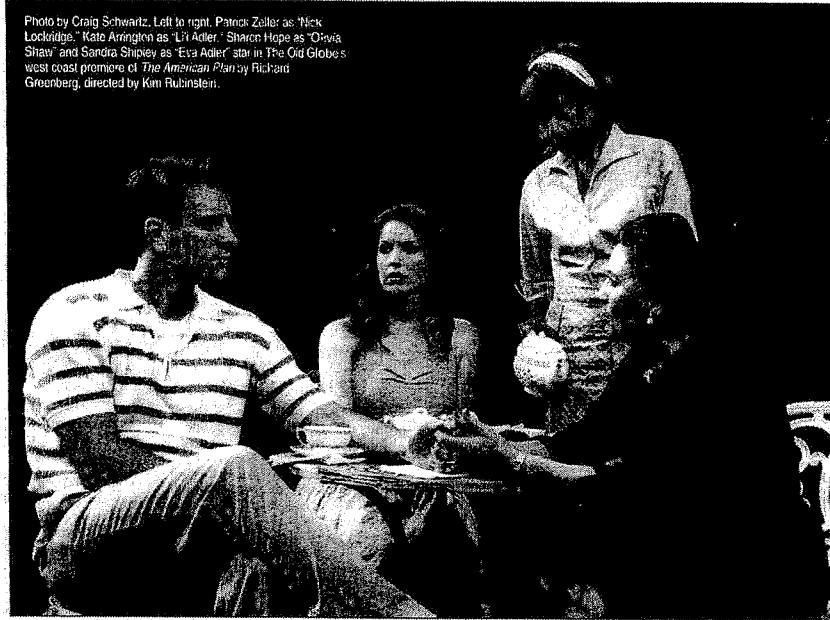


Photo by Craig Schwartz. Left to right, Patrick Zeller as "Nick Lockridge," Kate Arrington as "Lili Adler," Sharon Hope as "Olivia Shaw" and Sandra Shipley as "Eva Adler" star in The Old Globe's west coast premiere of *The American Plan* by Richard Greenberg, directed by Kim Rubinstein.

directed by UCSD's Kim Rubinstein.

Set in 1960, on the brink of major social changes, Greenberg's characters are stuck in their self-imposed boxes, perhaps desiring change, but more inclined to pretend than to do the work required to effect the transformation.

When Eva meets Nick, she leads him to believe he may be the one for Lili, and soon after is asking, "Where shall

we have the wedding?"

Predictably, this shall not come to pass. Mom does her research on the intended groom, finds him a dedicated liar (and, in fact, apparently bisexual), and that is that. The play ends in a coda in which it is clear that no one is happy.

This is Greenberg's third Old Globe appearance (his *Take Me Out* won a 2003 Tony; last season's *The Violet Hour* is the other) and in every one of his plays (as well as a fourth I saw in New York called *The House in Town*), I left wondering why I should care about these characters. Greenberg never gives me a reason. He seldom even gives me enough information to understand the characters. Why is Eva a dragon? Why is Lili crazy? Why is Nick a liar, and why would he even consider giving up his society girlfriend for this droopy (and loopy) girl? And what's with his gay friend Gil (Michael Kirby), who seems to be a stalker?

The actors work

their hearts out, but I never got the answers, and after a while, as with all Greenberg plays, I stopped caring.

The American Plan plays through March 30 at the Old Globe's Cassius Carter Centre Stage. Plays Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets call 619-23-GLOBE or visit www.theoldglobe.org.

March 13, 2008

Globe's 'Plan' a surprising human drama

By Eileen Sondak

FOR THE EAST COUNTY CALIFORNIAN

The Old Globe's Cassius Carter Stage is featuring the west coast premiere of "The American Plan" — a fascinating work by Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg. "The American Plan" is set in the Catskills, a convenient get-away spot outside of New York City that was a mecca for Jewish vacationers until the 1960s. However, the play is not about typical tourist life in that pleasant mountain retreat.

It is a human drama — and black comedy — with three characters at its core: a quirky young girl, her domineering mother, and a young man whose presence in the family strains the tenuous relationship between mother and daughter and sets the play's dramatic merry-go-round in motion.

The play is full of surprising plot twists, as we learn that none of the protagonists are what they seem to be. The playwright keeps you intrigued with these emotional



Photo by Craig Schwartz

Kate Arrington and Sandra Shipley in 'The American Plan'

detours, even when the story seems a bit far-fetched.

Local audiences know Greenberg's work from his dark comedy, "Take Me Out," which takes a different look at the old ballgame. "The American Plan" plays with one of the same themes — but in an entirely different way. It appears that putting a different spin on what starts as a predictable story is Greenberg's calling card.

The title of the play refers to the three-meals-a-day accommodations most hotels in the Catskills offered their guests. Under the American plan, dining was the centerpiece of the stay. "The American Plan" takes place across the lake from that lavish lifestyle, in the summer home of Eva Adler, a haughty refugee of the Holocaust.

In one of the most exciting entrances in the history of the Cassius Carter, a young man shows up at the compound. From then on, sparks fly between Nick (Patrick Zeller) and the eccentric daughter (Kate Arrington), and later with Eva (Sandra Shipley) getting into the complex mix.

The acting is outstanding, although the quick changes in direction make all three leading roles virtuoso parts. Two other actors — Sharon Hope as the faithful servant and Michael Kirby as a not-too-welcome old friend — contribute exciting moments of their own to the piece. Under Kim Rubinstein's direction, all the characters are edgy and a little mysterious.

You might not expect the theater-in-the-round ambiance of the Cassius Carter to lend itself to a country setting (complete with a small body of water and a grassy area) but scenic designer Wilson Chin managed to make the ambiance feel right as rain.

"The American Plan" is a challenging theatrical work, but the Old Globe's top-notch ensemble makes it seem like child's play. Nevertheless, there is nothing simple about the story and the emotional depths it mines.

"The American Plan" will continue at the Cassius Carter through March 30th. Tickets can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE.

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Calendar
THEATER

Plan Well Acted

“How can you take the sadness away from a girl who learned it so early in life?”

Maybe things're different across the lake, where vacationers play nonstrenuous games and pound down chow on the American Plan: three squares, plus tea, coffee, and snack breaks. They've come to the Catskills in the summer of 1960, it would seem, not for relaxation but regimentation. Their vacation will be orderly, predictable, and without incident, just like last year and the year before: programmed fun.

On Lili's side, the lake is the “River Styx,” the boundary between the Earth and Hades she crossed somewhere in her youth (“how can you take the sadness away,” her mother asks, “from a girl who learned it so early in life?”). Lili's brilliant — referencing Milton, Faulkner, and T.S. Eliot — but, according to her mother, she's also psychotic and cursed to live “an intricately unhappy life.”

In *The American Plan*, Richard Greenberg's written a fascinating character: Lili's an Ophelia who didn't commit suicide. Possibly influenced by her German-Jewish's family's experiences during WWI, she projects the Holocaust onto the world, finding insidious intent everywhere (she's convinced her mother murdered her father, for example). Lili's cried “wolf” so many times she could utter the truth unvarnished and you'd only hear a howl.

In an irony so broad it becomes predictable, Lili's right. Things, on this side of the lake at least,

aren't what they seem. Her mother's two- and possibly even three-faced (does she care or doesn't she — or, conditioned by Nazi horrors and oblivious to her own motives, is she smothering her daughter to save her from evils unseen?). Is Nick,

Lili's allegedly understanding Beau, just a gold-bricker after her inheritance? Olivia, the African-American maid, has a past, but at least she's honest enough to admit

that, if she confessed it, you wouldn't like her anymore. By the time young Gil shows up, looking innocent as can be, his deeper motive comes as no surprise.

Like most illusion-versus-reality plays, *American Plan* suffers from a domino effect: once you realize things aren't what they seem, you can anticipate that those to come will bring disillusionment as well. Sometimes Greenberg strikes a balance between both possibilities (Nick's affections seem genuine, or do they mask a greater affection for his Main Chance?). But the second act unfolds as expected, its fatalistic payoff lacking the punch of the first act's strong setup.

Greenberg is one of this country's finest playwrights. But compared to his *Three Days of Rain* and *Eastern Standard*, *American Plan* is a minor work. Even so, the writing's sharp and often quite witty, especially with Lili's unique take on things: her controlling mother's a “looming, late-Ibnesque figure”; and, a variation on Shakespeare's Miranda, Lili wishes that Nick was a brave new

REVIEW

JEFF SMITH



Patrick Zeller, Michael Kirby in *The American Plan*

The American Plan, by Richard Greenberg

Cassius Carter Center Stage, Simon Edison Centre for the Performing Arts, Balboa Park

Directed by Kim Rubenstein; cast: Patrick Zeller, Kate Arrington, Sharon Hope, Sandra Shipley, Michael Kirby; scenic design, Wilson Chin; costumes, Emily Pepper; lighting, Chris Rynne; sound, Paul Peterson

Playing through March 30; Sunday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Matinee Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 858-234-5623.

The Clean House, by Sarah Ruhl

San Diego Repertory Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, downtown

Directed by Sam Woodhouse; cast: Claudia Vázquez, Rosina Reynolds, Annie Hinton, Ivonne Coll, Ron Choularton; scenic design, Victoria Petrovich; costumes, Jennifer Brawn Gittings; lighting, Christian Deangelis; sound design/composer, Stephanie Robinson

Playing through March 22; Sunday and Wednesday at 7:00 p.m., Thursday through Saturday at 8:00 p.m. Matinee Sunday at 2:00 p.m. 619-544-1000.



Annie Hinton, Claudia Vázquez in *The Clean House*

being, to whom “nothing ever happened.”

As Lili, Kate Arrington expertly handles the role’s emotional non sequiturs and leaps of language. Arrington also conveys the sense, throughout, that Lili knows the outcome. She’s read *The American Plan*, and much of her inner tension comes from struggling against the inevitable. She even references Ophelia, at one point, when drawn to the lakeshore of Wilson Chin’s appealing — albeit Asteroturfed — set.

As Nick, Patrick Zeller has one of the most striking entrances in recent memory — makes quite a splash, let’s say. He and Michael Kirby, as Gil, and Sharon Hope as dour Olivia, do capable work. However, Lili’s domineering, elitist mother Eva gets lost in Sandra Shipley’s thick German-Jewish accent and programmed affectations. Shipley is too strident, even in her calmer scenes, and too external. She’s a Tyrant, capital T. We watch the reality of imitative acting rather than the illusion of performance.

The elegant, creamy-white living room, with faux marble floor, at the beginning of Sarah Ruhl’s *Clean House* is so immaculate it’s the kind of place people photo-shoot rather than inhabit. To the eyes of its owner, a workaholic surgeon named Lane, however, the joint’s a sty. Worse, her Brazilian cleaning lady Mathilde refuses to work. She’d rather create a joke so perfect the hearer would die from laughter.

In Freudian terms, an anal fixation can cause an obsession with cleanliness, order, even perfection. Lane’s got one. So does her husband Charles, also a surgeon, and her sister Virginia, who once saw European ruins and wondered why someone hadn’t swept them away — and who offers to become Mathilde’s surrogate cleaner. Now in middle age, they’ve become so rigid they’re almost emotionally static. In a hybrid style that combines farce, operatic aria, and Gabriel García Márquez’s “magic realism,” *The Clean House* declares that anality is banality. In its place, Ruhl advocates a life as spontaneous as laughter.

“A good joke can clean out the insides,” Mathilde says, waving the author’s banner.

The play jumps to unexpected places — the Arctic circle, among them — and alliances: the cheating husband falls for an older woman (to whom he sings while operating on her). It also combines locales, as apples fall from one reality to another.

The San Diego Rep’s opening-night performance was tentative in spots (the various epiphanies could be more epiphanic, for example, and the cast could worry less about making the magic credible and just enjoy making it); in others, it reached the laughter-like spontaneity Ruhl requires. But throughout, as it wends its deconstructing way, *The Clean House* is a very, very funny play. ■

NewsJournal

March 6, 2008

Globe hatches 'American Plan'



Patrick Zeller and Kate Harrington play the leads in 'The American Plan' a drama about characters writing their own histories during the 1960s. The play runs through March 30 at the Old Globe. *Photo Provided*

By **José A. López**

Early in "The American Plan," a woman looks at a man she's just met — and to whom she's obviously attracted to — and tells him he looks like someone nothing has ever happened to, calling him a "tabula rasa," or clean slate.

It's a loaded phrase, one that sets up a main theme of the Richard Greenberg play, running through

March 30 at the Old Globe's Cassius Carter Centre Theatre.

Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller), like all of the play's characters, is not without a past, and its consequences play a major part in the development of the plot.

The play explores the way people interpret their histories, and the stories they tell — real and not — about who they are and where they're going. It also looks at the

*Please see **Plan** page B14*

Plan

Continued from page B7

effect the stories have, both on the people to whom they are told and on those who are telling them.

Contradictions are a staple of Greenberg's plays (who won a Tony Award for his 2003 play "Take Me Out," about a gay baseball player) and this one is no exception.

It is set in 1960, in the New York Catskills, a resort area known as the "Borscht Belt," popular with middle class Jewish families from Brooklyn and the Bronx. The title, on the surface, refers to a hotel practice of including breakfast, lunch and dinner with the price of lodging.

We never see the resort (though we hear the resort's public address system now and again), or another nearby house mentioned by the characters. Instead, the entire play develops in a grassy backyard, complete with a weather-beaten pier overlooking a lake.

It is, as one character suggests, "neither here nor there" and the set designed by Wilson Chin is impressive in giving a good sense of the outdoors.

Lockridge is staying with friends — and a fiancée — at a lake-side resort, but seeking respite from endless games of shuffleboard, Bingo and Simon Says, he steals away for

swimming and sunbathing at a nearby property.

As the play opens Lockridge makes a dramatic entrance and is spotted by Lili Adler (Kate Harrington) a twenty-something who is either a free spirit, charmingly eccentric or a little crazy.

She seizes onto him instantly, and they quickly dispose of getting-to-know-you pleasantries. Their quick-witted exchange, full of one-liners ("I'm pre-occupied," she says, when he asks what she does for a living) quickly turns into an odd wooing ritual.

We learn that Lili lives on the property with her mother, Eva Adler, an imperial German-Jew who escaped from Nazi Germany in a boat (Sandra Shipley) and Olivia Shaw (Sharon Hope) their loyal but obstinate servant.

It is evident that wealthy Eva doesn't belong in the Catskills, where her regal composure earns her the nickname "Czarina." In fact, none of the characters really "fit in," not in the Catskills, not in the neatly defined roles they're supposed to inhabit.

The play suggest the characters are also mired in lives that are "neither here nor there," their aspirations entangled — and to a large degree stifled — by the predominant mores

of 1960s America.

The action develops as Lili and Nick forge a relationship and he is pulled between his love for her and the demands and the ever-dominating Eva.

They both tell him contradicting stories in their attempts to get him on their side. Eva may have poisoned her husband, if Lili is to be believed. Or maybe Lili, who spent some time in a hospital, is just telling stories. Like Nick, the audience is kept guessing through most of the play.

Things get further complicated in the second act, when Lockridge's past comes knocking in the form of Gil Harbison (Michael Kirby), who has no qualms about marrying into money and suspects that Nick may be doing the same. He has other plans for Nick, tearing him yet in another direction.

In an interview printed in the program notes, Greenberg says that "The American Plan" is one of his most plot-driven ventures, an amalgam of different genres from comedy to melodrama.

It's not a traditional plot, however.

Although it includes some clever twists that manage to be both bold and nuanced, the plot may be the weakest part of "The American Plan." It builds up slowly then erupts. It's an interest-

ing play, but ultimately the plot seems shoe-horned in.

An epilogue, which takes place 10 years later, also feels tacked on. It does, however, provide an open-ended resolution, if not closure to the characters.

The actors do a great job of getting the audience to know and care for the characters they inhabit, even if it takes some time to get used to their speaking patterns. The characters are vividly drawn, and one does end up caring about what will happen to them.

Zeller does a good job of making Lockridge believable as the play slowly chips away at his clean-cut image to reveal tortured soul. Shipley plays Ava with great aplomb, and does quite a feat of creating a character that is so sympathetic, despite the tragic implications of her constant calculating and manipulation. Harrington does a good job of balancing the quirkier side of her character with her vulnerability, showing just why Nick might be able to fall for her despite her instability.

"The American Plan" is directed by Kim Rubinstein, currently in the acting faculty of the University of California, San Diego.

Tickets range from \$42 to \$59. For more information, go to www.the-oldglobe.org.

LA JOLLA VILLAGE NEWS

March 6, 2008

Globe goes Gothic in the Catskills

By CHARLENE BALDRIDGE | VILLAGE NEWS

The Old Globe goes Gothic in the Catskills of 45 years ago with Richard Greenberg's eerie and poignant 1990 piece titled "The American Plan." Thanks to sound designer Paul Peterson's initial musical selection, a bit like Ophelia's mad scene from Ambrose Thomas' "Hamlet," we know immediately that we're not in Kansas anymore, especially when Lili Adler (the extraordinary Kate Arrington) enters. The whimpering sound of the vocal portrays her mental state as well as her titillation upon seeing Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller, excellent), who's staying at the resort on the other side, emerge from the "lake" inside the Cassius Carter Centre Stage. There's a bit of stage magic for you.

A New Yorker who went to Sarah Lawrence, Lili summers with her widowed mother, "a dreadful woman" who survived the Holocaust, and their aging, privileged and knowing servant Olivia (Sharon Hope, a terrific portrayal) in a mansion on the shore.

As played by Sandra Shipley, Eva Adler is the manipulative

mother from hell, attracting, repelling and destroying a different young man each summer.

We witness the process aghast and grow more certain with

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every scene that the situation, the characters and their motivations are not as they seem. Truth is elusive and the second act wallop delivered by young Gil Harbison (Michael Kirby) comes out of the blue.

The lake is truly a palpable character and one expects Lili, like the tragic Ophelia, to wind up tangled in its reeds, especially when Nick teaches her to swim.

As staged by Kim Rubinstein — who heads the undergraduate

acting program at UCSD and was associate artistic director at Long Wharf Theatre — it had its sluggish moments opening night (Feb. 28). As it tightens during the run, "The American Plan" will become an even more fascinating page-turner. The inevitable ending leaves one wanting more of these finely played and finely etched characters.

The Old Globe has produced Greenberg's "The Violet Hour," "Three Days of Rain" and "Take Me Out." The playwright, whose characters are always fascinating and complex, never repeats himself.

Beautifully bathed in summer by Chris Rynne's lighting, Wilson Chin's set and Emily Pepper's costumes, the experience takes us to upstate New York, circa 1960. On the surface, it's a familiar and comforting summer of our youth, but the psychological waters are extremely dark.

"The American Plan" continues through March 30 in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage. For information and tickets, visit www.theoldglobe.org or CALL (619) 23-GLOBE. 🍷



PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ

Patrick Zeller as "Nick Lockridge" (left) and Michael Kirby as "Gli Harbison" in The Old Globe's West Coast premiere of "The American Plan," through March 30.

March 5, 2008

ON STAGE

CHECK THIS OUT

By any other name: For a play of its title, The Old Globe Theatre's *The American Plan* doesn't really feature anything all that American. Sure, it's set in the Catskills, and the year is 1960, when the torch was passed to a new president and a new generation—but Richard Greenberg's story may as well have unfolded in Jakarta. It centers on Lily (Kate Arrington), eccentrically and desperately fighting her Jewish mother Eva's control as a mysterious man drops into their lives. Turns out he's had a clandestine hook-up with another guy, et cetera, et cetera. It's all highly situational, and that calls for subtext that enhances the setting, but little of that is forthcom-

ing (Eva's a Holocaust survivor, for example, yet Greenberg glosses over her experiences). Director Kim Rubinstein coaxes a nice performance from Arrington, but without some kind of uniquely American social or historical backdrop, everything else seems flat. The show runs through March 30 at The Globe's Cassius Carter Centre Stage, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. \$52-\$69. 619-23-GLOBE or www.oldglobe.org.

—*Martin Jones Westlin*



The American Plan

'The American Plan': Gothic in the Catskills

By CHARLENE BALDRIDGE | DOWNTOWN NEWS

The Old Globe goes Gothic in the Catskills of 45 years ago with Richard Greenberg's eerie and poignant 1990 piece titled "The American Plan." Thanks to sound designer Paul Peterson's initial musical selection, a bit like Ophelia's mad scene from Ambroise Thomas' "Hamlet," we know immediately that we're not in Kansas anymore, especially when Lili Adler (the extraordinary Kate Arrington) enters. The whimpering sound of the vocal portrays her mental state as well as her titillation upon seeing Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller, excellent), who's staying at the resort on the other side, emerge from the "lake" inside the Cassius Carter Centre Stage. There's a bit of stage magic for you.

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— CLASS ACT ENTERTAINMENT —

Terrific cast unfolds solid story in 'American Plan'



Kate Arrington, Sandra Shipley and Patrick Zeller star in *The American Plan*. Photo credit: Craig Schwartz.

Review by Diana Saenger

Set in the early 1960s on a lovely isle across a lake from the famed Catskills retreat, *The American Plan* tackles several themes in its cross examination of America's double standards during that era.

The playwright is Tony Award-winning Richard Greenberg, who is considered one of the American theatre's greatest living playwrights. Kim Rubinstein directs the marvelous cast of

Kate Arrington (Lily Adler), Patrick Zeller (Nick Lockridge), Sandra Shipley (Eva Adler), Sharon Hope (Olivia Shaw) and Michael Kirby (Gil Harbison).

Lily is outside her mother's home one day when she comes upon a young man sunbathing near the boat dock. She learns Nick swam across from the Catskills to get away from "the stuffy crowd." They talk, and then flirt; she learns he writes for Time magazine and wants to be an architect; he learns she lives off of her mother's wealth but has pipe dreams. Very quickly Nick discovers Lily is not like most of the women he meets.

Lily flits about the grassy knoll giggling, finishing Nick's statements and asking silly questions like, "How old are you when it's too late to be happy."

Once Nick has swam away but promised to return, Eva, Lily's German mother, and

bargains with him to keep up his affection towards Lily.

It's hard to say who the best of the three leads is as all are delightful. Shipley is like a two-way mirror where she's the doting mother who turns into the stern Jewish task master, even berating Olivia when things are not right for tea. "How can you have demitasse when the spoons are elsewhere," she barks.

Arrington is the perfect Lily, giddy, acquiescent and wanting only to love and be loved. She's trapped in a world she so badly wants to escape that she will take anything — truth or not.

Zeller is like the three faces of Eve in this story. "Lily must be singed by a thing to keep from being incinerator by it," Eva tells him. Which leaves Nick not quite knowing which way to turn.

Topping off this entertaining play is the set, which artfully fits in with every scene and combined with the great performances make that imaginary Catskills come vividly to life in our imagination.

The American Plan runs in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage, 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park now — March

30. For tickets or more info call (619) 23-GLOBE, visit Globe website www.TheOldGlobe.org or the Globe box office.

Coming Soon...to the Globe - 'Dancing In The Dark'

Dancing In The Dark, with book by Douglas Carter Beane (*Xanadu*, *The Little Dog Laughed*), adapted from the screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Howard Dietz, and directed by Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*), produced by Permission of Warner Bros. Theatre Ventures, Inc., runs in the Old Globe Theatre March 4 — April 13.

Golden Globe-winner and multi Emmy-nominated stage and screen star Scott Bakula (*Quantum Leap*, *American Beauty*) will play the role of "Tony Hunter." Patrick Page (who just wrapped up his second season playing the title role in the Broadway production of *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*) will portray the role of "Jeffrey Cordova," and Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel (*The Drowsy Chaperone*) will play "Lily" in this delightful new musical based on the classic MGM movie *The Band Wagon*.



Scott Bakula, Beth Leavel and cast rehearse for *Dancing In The Dark*



Kim Rubinstein, head of UCSD's undergrad acting program, directs the West Coast premiere of "The American Plan." *Earnie Grafton / Union-Tribune*

'PEOPLE ARE DEEPLY MYSTERIOUS'

By James Hebert
ARTS WRITER

On the stage of the Old Globe's Cassius Carter space, where Richard Greenberg's "The American Plan" opens this week, there's a small pool of water. It's a fitting feature for a play whose characters convey a deep sense of fluidity.

"It's very much about identity," says Kim Rubinstein, who has headed the undergraduate acting program at UCSD since last spring and makes her Old Globe directing debut with the play. "It's like, what is the difference between the illusion of a person, and what's real?"

"I'm very interested as a director in what we know and do not know about ourselves. And when you're creating a character as an

Director **Kim Rubinstein's** comfortable paradoxes — 'We're made of opposites'

DETAILS

"The American Plan"
When: Tuesdays-Wednesdays, 7 p.m.; Thursdays-Fridays, 8 p.m.; Saturdays, 2 and 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 and 7 p.m.; through March 30
Where: Old Globe Theatre's Cassius Carter Centre Stage
Tickets: \$42-\$59
Phone: (619) 234-5623
Online: TheOldGlobe.org

actor, you always want to figure everything out. But really, people are deeply mysterious. We're full of

paradox. We're made of opposites."

That layered feel for characters' complexities and contradictions runs strongly through Greenberg's works — "The Violet Hour," "Three Days of Rain" and the Tony-winning "Take Me Out" among them.

This happens to be Rubinstein's second time directing "The American Plan" — the first was six years ago with Roadworks in Chicago — and so returning to it has proved an identity-finding expedition for her as well.

The play is "so much about being at a crossroads," which is where

the Cleveland native was back in 2002 (thanks to a pending divorce and other life events).

"All five of the characters feel, in different ways, frozen with terror," Rubinstein says. "And also a tremendous yearning to change. There's a huge yearning in this play, and a feeling of being trapped. And I certainly was in that when I was directing it."

"(So) it's pretty fascinating to come back to the play. I'm not as close to it now, but I can see it better, in a way."

First staged in New York in 1990, "The American Plan" takes place in 1960 at a resort hotel in the Catskills. The play centers on Eva Adler (Sandra Shipley), a strong-willed European transplant

SEE 'American Plan,' 5

'AMERICAN PLAN'
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

who lost much to the Holocaust; her cowed daughter, Lily (Kate Arrington); and Nick Lockridge (Patrick Zeller), a magazine writer who creates a rift when he drifts into their lives.

Although Jerry Patch, the Globe's co-artistic director, worked on 10 or so of Greenberg's plays in his long tenure as dramaturge at South Coast Rep in Orange County — which commissioned a number of the playwright's works — this one didn't happen to be among them.

"We always felt, well, we'll do that one someday," says Patch, who considers Greenberg a good friend. "And then he'd come out with another one and another one — he just took his own spot in the calendar again and again."

Patch describes Greenberg as a "writer's writer," deeply knowledgeable about craft and able to master a wide variety of subject matter and emotional tones. Although "Take Me Out," about the coming-out of a gay baseball player, made the biggest splash of all his plays, a New York revival of 1997's "Three Days of Rain" caused a clamor in 2006 mostly because it starred Julia Roberts.)

A sister piece opens at North Coast Rep

As "The American Plan" chronicles, in part, the lasting consequences of the Holocaust, another play opening locally this week deals with that atrocity more directly.

North Coast Repertory Theatre's "A Shayna Maidel" is the story of two sisters — one of them a Holocaust survivor — reunited in America 20 years after World War II. The play, by Barbara Lebow, has previews tonight and tomorrow and opens Saturday, running through March 23.

When "A Shayna Maidel" (which translates from the Yiddish as "a pretty girl") had its local premiere with the Gaslamp Quarter Theatre in 1991, it was directed by David Ellenstein, who cast his father, Robert, in the work. Now, Ellenstein is North Coast Rep's artistic director, and is again heading up the production.

The cast for this show includes Maya Baldwin, Ralph Elias, Christy Hall, Jessica John, Candis Paule and Christopher Williams. Information/tickets: (858) 481-1055 or northcoastrep.org.

— JAMES HEBERT

The relationship at the core of "The American Plan," Patch recalls, was inspired by a simple scene Greenberg observed at a restaurant: the interaction of two women who appeared to be mother and daughter.

"The older woman was talking," says Patch, "and the younger woman was moving her mouth, as if she were trying to eat the words as fast as she could" — a model for

the power relationship between Ava and Lily.

Although the play is not really about the Holocaust, says Rubinstein — she talks of the romance and humor that leaven the work's more somber elements — that tragedy does loom large because of its lasting emotional legacy.

"I think part of what this play is about is what's inherited," she says. "You actually inherit experi-

ence. So the terrors your parents experienced, the traumas, get handed down in various ways because of the way they raise you. And perhaps in the DNA, somehow or other.

"For instance, Ava, who escaped the Nazis in Germany in a boat — almost like (Shakespeare's) 'The Tempest' — has a terror of water, even though she lives right on this little lake. And so Lily is (also) terrified of swimming.

"It's in so many places in this play — what Lily has inherited because of her mother's fear. And her mother's need to control her universe. Because everything was taken away from her."

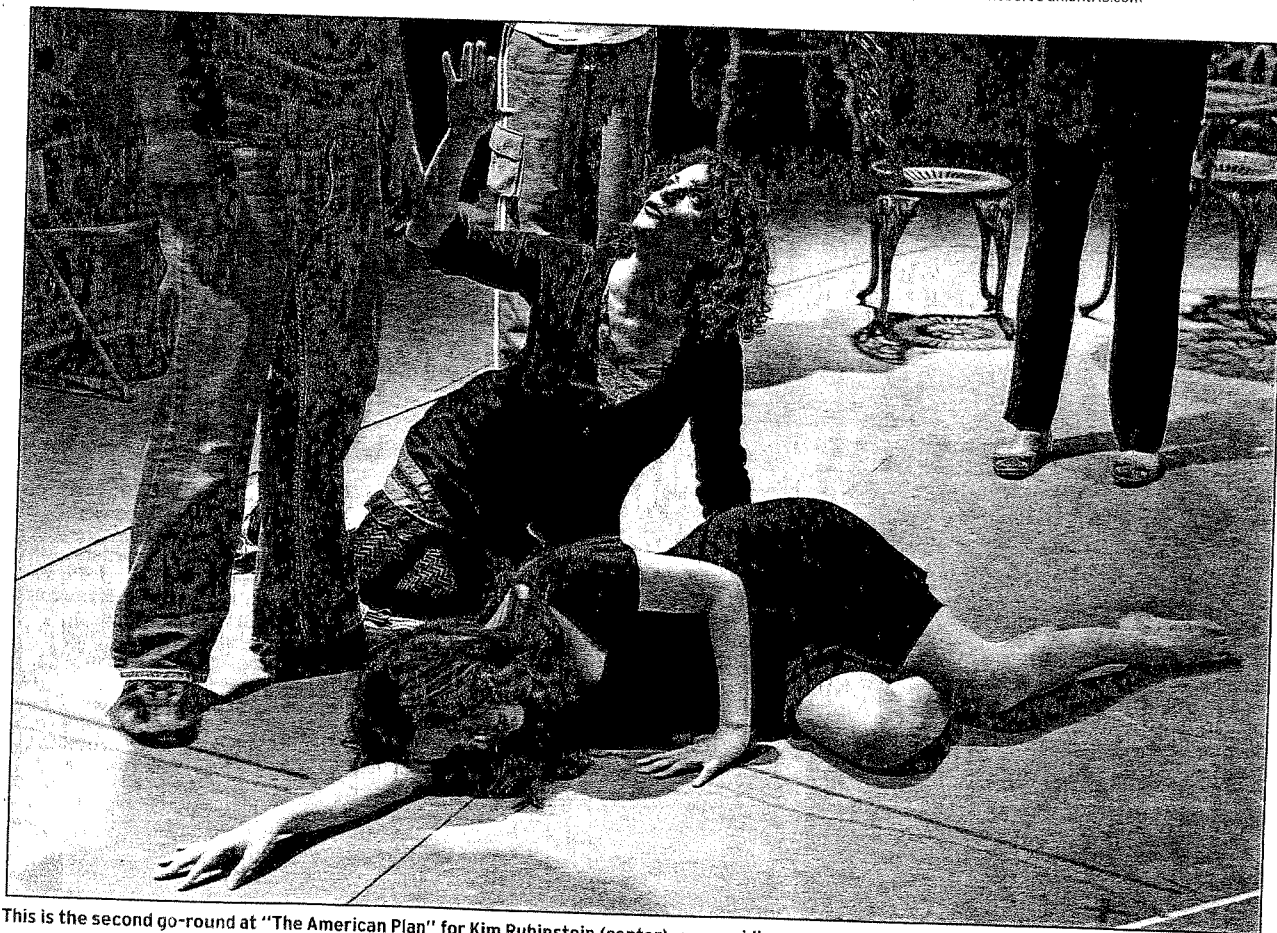
The play's time period, on the leading edge of 1960s social upheaval, adds an additional, powerful dimension to the play's themes of fractured identity and finding the courage to change, Rubinstein believes.

"Moments like that, when you're on the edge of a revolution in yourself and in the world, it feels like combustion," she says.

"It feels like something's trembling under the earth. Ready to burst."

James Hebert: (619) 293-2040; jim.hebert@uniontrib.com

UP
FRONT



This is the second go-round at "The American Plan" for Kim Rubinstein (center), seen guiding a Globe rehearsal here. Earnie Grafton / Union-Tribune



UP FRONT

Changing times

In the Old Globe's production of Richard Greenberg's "The American Plan," characters are trapped by their fear of life's changes, and they must accept that fear and find the courage to face those changes.

March 6, 2008

PLAYBILL

For contact information on these shows, please cross reference with accompanying directory. For more Playbill listings, go to utstreet.com.

THEATER/OPERA

CRITIC'S CHOICE

'The American Plan' Richard Greenberg's story of power games and thwarted love at a Catskills resort in 1960 gets a delicate, well-acted staging in its West Coast premiere. Kim Rubinstein's direction finds a deft balance of comedy and melancholy, and while the coda feels a bit out of place, the play's rich atmosphere and sharp dialogue make for an involving combination. *Closes March 30. Old Globe Theatre's Cassius Carter Centre Stage.* (James Hebert)

'The Seven' Hip-hop artist Will Power has Aeschylus's number in this funny, potent and propulsive take on the Greek dramatist's classic "Seven Against Thebes." Blues, rap and gospel blend with the ancient story of Oedipus (played as mack daddy by Edwin Lee Gibson) and his warring sons. Bill T. Jones's vividly stylized choreography completes an original, compelling package. *Closes March 16. La Jolla Playhouse; Sheila and Hughes Potiker Theatre.* (James Hebert).

'A Shayna Maidel' Two Jewish sisters reunite in New York after the Second World War. Rose, who left Poland in time, is a chic career girl. Lusia has survived a concentration camp, and Jessica John's exquisite portrayal makes her the glowing heart of this beautifully realized production. David Ellenstein directed, and every detail impeccably evokes the '40s, from Marty Burnett's set to Jeanne Reith's costumes to Chris Luessmann's sound design. *Closes March 23. North Coast Repertory Theatre.* (Janice Steinberg)

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February 28, 2008

'The American Plan' comes to The Old Globe

By Whitney Youngs

The era is the early 1960s and the site is the Catskills where a young writer for *Time* magazine, Nick Lockridge, ends up spending a summer at a resort hotel and falls in love with a Jewish girl caught under the spell of her manipulative mother.

In Richard Greenberg's play, "The American Plan," Lily Adler (Kate Arrington), the 20-year-old daughter of a wealthy German émigrés, plans to marry the WASP Lockridge (Patrick Zeller) with some qualities fitting of Fitzgerald's *Gatsby* narrator Nick Carraway by the end of the first act.

The West Coast premiere of Greenberg's 1990 off-Broadway work is currently playing on The Old Globe's Cassius Carter stage through March 30 and stars the British-born actress Sandra Shipley as Eva Adler—Lily's overbearing mother—who discovers a skeleton in her potential future son-in-law's closet, making him an unfit suitor.

"The whole play is so complex and all of the characters are very complicated," said Shipley. "Eva, I think is, deeply flawed, awe-inspiring with her strength. She has a very complicated daughter who has all sorts of problems, which I think is a huge disappointment to her, but it's her only love, it's the only thing that she has and she'll protect that daughter at all costs."

Shipley, who moved to America in 1973 where she figured she would live for a year, is based in Boston and got involved with the local production since she has worked with Darko Tresnjak in the past. He is one of the artistic directors at The Old

Globe. The play, directed by Kim Rubinstein, reveals that Eva and her scientist husband escape Germany by boat during World War II. In fact, the concept of water plays an integral role in the production at the lake retreat. Eva seems to come from a privileged life in Germany where she had access to the best

education and perhaps thought she was immune to the social compromises she faces in New York that don't put her in the company of those living on Park or Madison avenues. The play concludes about a decade later in New York City in a Central Park West apartment.

"Eva has come to the Catskills where she is mixing with other German Jewish people, but people who she thinks—and she's quite plain about it—are not her equals," said Shipley. "She looks down on them, and yet as far as Americans are concerned she's one of them—she's German and Jewish."

As one of the most well-known living playwrights, Greenberg also wrote "Take Me Out"—which received the Tony award and turned him

into a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize—that came to The Old Globe in 2005, while his work "The Violet Hour" premiered in 2006. Greenberg's play "Three Days of Rain" was also a finalist for the Pulitzer and won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Award.

"I had seen some of his work before," said Shipley about her familiarity with Greenberg's plays. "I loved seeing 'The Dazzle' and I find him a very fascinating writer."

"The American Plan" plays at The Old Globe through March 30. For more information visit www.theoldglobe.org.



Sandra Shipley

February 28, 2008

UCSD faculty member to direct at Old Globe

By Maria Connor

Kim Rubinstein, head of the UCSD undergraduate action program, is directing the West Coast premiere of playwright Richard Greenberg's "The American Plan" at the Old Globe Theater in San Diego.

Rubinstein has both taught and directed throughout her career, which included stints at Long Wharf Theatre, Northwestern University, University of Chicago, Wesleyan University, the School at Steppenwolf, and national tours.

"Teaching, for me, is a sanctuary and a laboratory," Rubinstein said.

She accepted her current position at UCSD in April 2007, drawn by the university's reputation.

Part of her fascination with acting is what she terms the "elusiveness" of the craft. During her own personal studies and apprenticeships, she experimented with physical and abstract theater. It is the same kind of experience she tries to create for her students. She calls this "wilderness training."

Before refining technical craft skills, Rubinstein believes actors should explore the

boundaries of their internal and external environments so that they can become deeply reactive. Her classes are about the process of acting, not the final product. This enables her students to learn balance: a willingness to risk being off balance, yet at the same time knowing where your stability lies.

"Ultimately, you have to have both," she said.

Rubinstein was drawn to "The American Plan" because of its themes. To her, the play is about the enormous desire for connection to someone who really gets who you are and the need for authentic identity that is kept in check by societal and personal relationships.

"Richard Greenberg does an amazing job of setting up what we think of as a romantic comedy and suspense,

and then all of our expectations are turned upside down," Rubinstein said. "Every day in rehearsal, I am thrilled and amazed by the many, many layers of these characters."

When directing, Rubinstein works to develop the psychological and physical manifestation of the characters through her actors.

"The stage is like a petri dish, with the people looking down on this human experience."

KIM RUBINSTEIN, DIRECTOR



Kim Rubinstein

"The stage is like a petri dish, with the people looking down on this human experience," she said.

"The American Plan" opened Feb. 23 and runs through March 30. For Old Globe tickets and show times, call (619) 23-GLOBE or visit www.theoldglobe.org.

THEATERMANIA

FOR THEATER EVERYWHERE

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TM Theater News

Full Cast, Creative Team Set for Old Globe's *The American Plan*

By: **Brian Scott Lipton** · Jan 23, 2008 · San Diego

Kate Arrington, Pat Bowie, Michael Kirby, Sandra Shipley, and Patrick Zeller will star in the Old Globe's production of Richard Greenberg's *The American Plan*, to play the Cassius Carter Centre Stage, February 23-March 30. The production, which will open officially on February 28, will be directed by Kim Rubinstein.

The play is set in an idyllic Catskills retreat in the early 1960s and focuses on an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives. Greenberg's other works include *Take Me Out*, *The Violet Hour*, *Three Days of Rain*, and *The Dazzle*.

The creative features Wilson Chin (sets), Emily Pepper (costumes), Chris Rynne (lighting), and Paul Peterson (sound). Rubinstein's regional credits include *Guys and Dolls*, *The Cocktail Hour*, *The Intelligent Design of Jenny Chow*, and *Beckett Shorts*.

For more information, call 619-23-GLOBE or visit www.theoldglobe.org.



Sandra Shipley
(© Joseph Marzullo/WENN)

[close]



Cast Announced for West Coast Debut of Greenberg's *The American Plan*

By Ernio Hernandez
23 Jan 2008

San Diego's Old Globe Theatre has announced the cast for the West Coast premiere of Richard Greenberg's *The American Plan*.

Kim Rubinstein will direct the California run of the 1990 play that will be presented on the Cassius Carter Centre Stage Feb. 23-March 30 with an official opening Feb. 28.

"Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat... in the early 1960s," show notes state, "*The American Plan* tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives."

Kate Arrington (*Hold Please*) will lead a cast that also features Pat Bowie (*The Song of Jacob Zulu*), Michael Kirby, Sandra Shipley (*Pygmalion*) and Patrick Zeller.

The design team includes Wilson Chin (scenic), Emily Pepper (costume), Chris Rynne (lighting) and Paul Peterson (sound). Leila Knox serves as stage manager.

Playwright Greenberg has penned Pulitzer Prize finalists *Take Me Out* and *The Three Days of Rain* as well as *The Violet Hour*, *A Naked Girl on the Appian Way*, *The Dazzle*, *Everett Beekin*, *Hurrah at Last* and *Night and Her Stars*.

Rubinstein recently directed *Guys and Dolls*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Private Lives*, *The Santaland Diaries* and *The Cocktail Hour* at Long Wharf Theatre, where she served as associate artistic director.

The Old Globe currently presents *In This Corner* (through Feb. 10) and *Sea of Tranquility* (through Feb. 17). The season will continue, beyond *The American Plan*, with *Dancing in The Dark* (March 4-April 13), *The Glass Menagerie* (April 12-May 18) and the Hershey Felder trio: *Beethoven*, *As I Knew Him* (May 3-June 8), *Monsieur Chopin* (June 11-22) and *George Gershwin Alone* (June 25-29).

The Pleasure of His Company and *Sight Unseen* will be featured in The Old Globe's 2008 summer season along with Shakespeare Festival shows *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *All's Well That Ends Well*.

Tickets for *The American Plan* (on sale Jan. 27) are available by



Greenberg's 'The American Plan' Opens Feb.28 at Old Globe

[Back to the Article](#)

by BWV News Desk

Old Globe presents the west coast premiere of *The American Plan*, by Richard Greenberg (*Take Me Out*, *Three Days of Rain*), directed by Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage February 23 – March 30 (press opening: Thursday, February 28 at 8PM).

"*The American Plan* is a funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives," explain press notes.

The cast includes Kate Arrington (Lily Adler), Pat Bowie (Olivia Shaw), Michael Kirby (Gil Harbison), [Sandra Shipley](#) (Eva Adler) and Patrick Zeller (Nick Lockridge)

The production team includes Kim Rubinstein, director; [Wilson Chin](#), scenic design; [Emily Pepper](#), costume design; Chris Rynne, lighting design; Paul Peterson, sound design; and Leila Knox, stage manager.

Show times are Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7PM; Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8PM; and matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2PM.

Tickets for (\$42-\$59) *The American Plan* go on sale Sunday, January 27 (currently available through subscription) and can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe website at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



by eileen sondak

march on stage

March may turn out to be the most exciting month of the year for entertainment – with the arrival of a world premiere musical at the Old Globe, a full slate at the newly-restored Balboa Theater, a resurgence of classical dance, and a cornucopia of musical and operatic performances coming our way.

The Old Globe mined an old MGM musical to bring “Dancing in the Dark” to life on its Main Stage, before the musical extravaganza takes off for a Broadway run. This exciting world premiere (based on “The Band Wagon”) will open on March 4 – reviving vintage songs like “That’s Entertainment” and the title song, and offering audiences a live look at the memorable dance sequence that Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse immortalized on film.

Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel and Adam Heller are part of the top-notch Broadway cast. Director Gary Griffin (Broadway’s “The Color Purple”) will stage the show, so check it out before it leaves town on April 13. Meanwhile, Richard Greenberg’s “The American Plan” (an amusing and intriguing story set in the Catskills during the 1960s) will continue its run at the Cassius Carter through March 30.

The North Coast Rep’s production of Barbara Lebow’s “A Shayna Maidel” will showcase its story of survival and hope following the Holocaust until March 23. This emotional tale of a family’s ability to transcend grief is directed by North Coast Rep’s David Ellenstein.

The San Diego Opera is featuring a dynamic double bill (March 22– April 2). Two beloved one-act operas (Mascagni’s “Cavalleria Rusticana” and Leoncavallo’s “Pagliacci”) will be paired for this delightful operatic event. San Diego favorite Richard Leech will sing Turiddu in “Cavalleria...,” while

internationally-acclaimed tenor Jose Cura stars in “Pagliacci.” That’s a two-tenor bonanza for opera-lovers, and Edoardo Muller will conduct. The last time San Diegans saw these two operas was in 1979.

The San Diego Symphony starts out the March slate on the 1 with Maestro Jahja Ling conducting the orchestra, and violinist Martin Chalifour and the San Diego Master Chorale as guest artists. The program will feature several works, including Barber’s Adagio for Strings. March 2 marks a special performance of Winter Pops with the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and the Band of the Coldstream Guards.

The Jacobs Masterworks continues on March 7–9 with Maestro Ling and violist Che-Yen Chen performing a varied program that includes Bartok’s Viola Concerto. Winter Pops is back again on March 14–15 with Marvin Hamlisch leading a Salute to Richard Rodgers.

The Symphony’s popular Family Festival returns on March 16 with “The Language of Music.” As usual, there will be pre-concert activities for the youngsters before the performance — including a musical “petting zoo.”

The Symphony Exposed Series continues on March 27 with Edward Cumming on the podium,

■ The last time San Diegans saw these two operas was in 1979.

AT THE OPERA: Richard Leech sings Turiddu and José Cura sings Canio in *Cavalleria Rusticana/Pagliacci*.



PHOTO © SASHA GUSOV AND CORY WEAVER

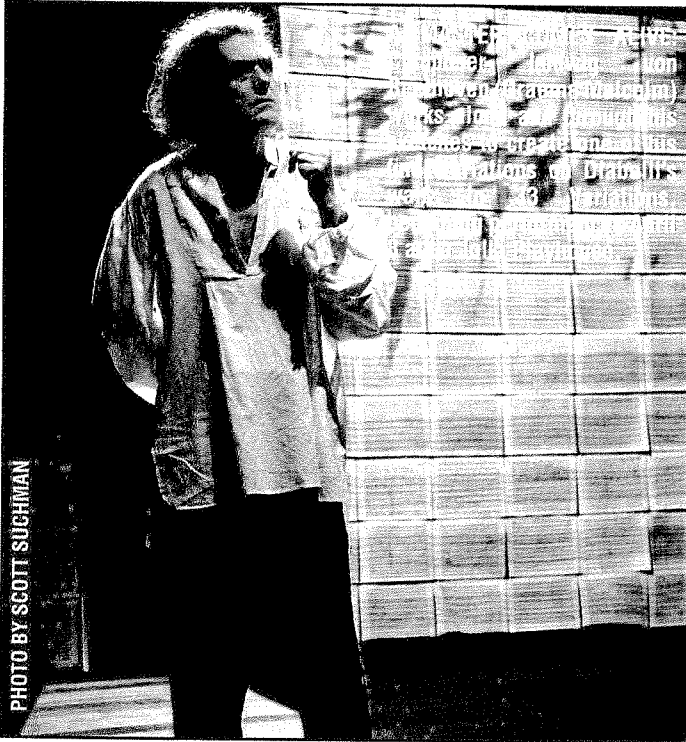


PHOTO BY SCOTT SUCHMAN

and on March 29 Maestro Cumming returns for a performance with pianist William Wolfram.

The California Ballet is celebrating 40 years on the San Diego scene with a production of "Cinderella" at the Civic Theater on March 1-2. With music by Prokofiev to propel the delightful fairytale, this is a classical ballet for the whole family. "Cinderella" (originally created for the Eugene Ballet) is a premiere for the Cal Ballet – and it comes complete with lavish sets and costumes. It will star Jennifer Curry as Cinderella.

City Ballet will unveil Elizabeth Wistrich's designs for "Carmina Burana," a ballet first created in 1984 and re-choreographed in 1995. The piece will be presented at the North Park Theater (March 7-9) along with the company premiere of "Kingdom of the Shades," from "La Bayadere," elaborately staged with elegant new costumes.

The world premiere performance of John Malashock's "Stay the Hand," a fusion of dance, music, poetry and design (in collaboration with renowned Jewish composer Shahrokh Yadegari) won't take place until April 4. However, before the work moves into the North Park Theater, an informal and interactive showing that includes conversations with the artists will take place at the Malashock Dance Studio (March 7 – 9).

The newly renovated Balboa Theater got off to a great start – and its busy slate continues this month with Dublin's Irish Cabaret (March 7 – 8), "Frog and Toad," a Tony-nominated musical featuring the beloved children's stories of Arnold Lobel (March 9), the Vienna Boys Choir (March 16), a '40s-style big band experience (March

20), and the California Ballet's collaboration with guest company Opus M – direct from Munich – March 28-29. How did we get along without this valuable downtown space for so long?

The La Jolla Playhouse's production of "The Seven" remains at the Potiker Theater until March 16. Described as "Greek tragedy meets hip-hop" "The Seven" is a music-based piece, choreographed by the great Bill T. Jones. And this year, we can look for the Playhouse to enjoy an extended season – starting in April with a "music mystery" ("33 Variations") written and directed by Moises Kaufman. In fact, the troupe will mount eight plays in three different spaces in the 2008-09 season.

The Lamb's Players revival of "Hello, Dolly" plays on through March 16. The musical (based on Thornton Wilder's American classic, "The Matchmaker") is a treat for young and old.

Moonlight's Avo Playhouse (its winter home in Vista) will present George Bernard Shaw's witty comedy, "You Never Can Tell," March 6–23.

The La Jolla Music Society will feature Yunki Li on piano on March 7 at Sherwood Auditorium – with a program that includes Chopin, Liszt, and Ravel (among others). Wunderkid Kit Armstrong puts on a show with his piano (and his own work) on March 9 at the Neurosciences Institute. Its jazz series at the North Park Theater will showcase James Moody and his saxophone on March 22. Barb Jung is slated for Schulman Auditorium in Carlsbad on March 14 for a vocal tribute to Bob Dylan.

The California Center for the Arts in Escondido starts the month with Hubbard Street Dance Company on March 1, followed on the 16 with the State Symphony of Mexico. On March 21-22, the Center's Alternative Stage will present the Speak Theater Arts' show – a mix of drama, hip-hop, slam poetry, and stand-up comedy. To conclude the month's slate on March 29, Susan Egan – the Belle of Broadway – will deliver the goods.

Mainly Mozart's 12th annual Spotlight Series will feature concert pianist Jeremy Denk on March 14-15 at the Neurosciences Institute. Denk appears again on March 16 at the Inn at Rancho Santa Fe, and a twilight reception is part of the program.

The Lyric Opera is taking a hiatus this month, but its North Park Theater is still hosting interesting events. March 14 the 28 drummers and musicians of Jigu: Thunder Drums of China will astound audiences.

Diversions Theater will launch its "Blue Bonnet Court" production on March 20. This co-production with Moxie Theater will remain on the boards until April 13.

J*Company will take on the Elton John/Tim Rice musical sensation, "Aida" March 1-16. This pop-rock version of the opera should attract adults as well as children to the J Company's home at the JCC in La Jolla.

The San Diego Natural History Museum transports visitors back to the ancient Roman Empire for "A Day in Pompeii." This exhibition of priceless artifacts (a West Coast premiere) includes 250 artifacts uncovered from beneath 30 feet of volcanic material in that once-cosmopolitan city. Some of these artifacts had never been on display before 2007. ☆

February 7, 2008

Old Globe presents West Coast Premiere of 'The American Plan'

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto and Co-Artistic Directors Jerry Patch and Darko Tresnjak are pleased to announce the West Coast premiere of "The American Plan," by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out, Three Days of Rain"), directed by Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage Feb. 23 - March 30.

Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg is considered one of the American theatre's greatest living playwrights. The American Plan is his funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives.

The cast of *In This Corner* features Kate Arrington (Hold Please) as "Lily Adler," Pat Bowie as "Olivia Shaw," Old Globe/USD MFA student Michael Kirby as "Gil Harbison," Sandra Shipley as "Eva Adler," and Patrick Zeller as "Nick Lockridge."

The production team includes Kim Rubinstein, director; Wilson Chin, scenic design; Emily Pepper, costume design; Chris Rynne, lighting design; Paul Peterson, sound design; and Leila Knox, stage manager.

Tickets for *The American Plan* are on sale now and can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe Web site at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



OLD GLOBE PRESENTS
WEST COAST PREMIERE OF
The American Plan

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto and Co-Artistic Directors Jerry Patch and Darko Tresnjak are pleased to announce the west coast premiere of *The American Plan* by Richard Greenberg, directed by Head of UCSD Undergraduate Acting Program, Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage February 23 through March 30. Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg is considered one of the American theater's greatest living playwrights.

The American Plan is his funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set

in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother; her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives.

IF YOU GO — **THE AMERICAN PLAN**, at Cassius Carter Center Stage, Balboa Park, San Diego, February 23 - March 30. Tickets are \$46 and may be purchased by calling 619.23.GLOBE, on line at theoldglobe.org, or in person at the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park. For show times and additional information visit theoldglobe.org.

January 31, 2008

Old Globe presents West Coast Premiere of 'The American Plan'

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto and Co-Artistic Directors Jerry Patch and Darko Tresnjak are pleased to announce the West Coast premiere of "The American Plan," by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out, Three Days of Rain"), directed by Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage Feb. 23 – March 30.

Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg is considered one of the American theatre's greatest living playwrights. The American Plan is his funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives. Tickets for The American Plan are on sale now and can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe Web site at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

SAN DIEGO
Reader

February 21, 2008

Insight Seminar for "The American Plan" Seminar with actors, designers, directors offered for each Old Globe Theatre production; artists from all phases of production process plan "lively exchange of ideas and insights that enhance the theatergoing experience." 619-23-GLOBE. Monday, February 25, 6:30 p.m.; The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, (BALBOA PARK)

San Diego Daily Transcript

February 22, 2008

SATURDAY, FEB 23 - THEATER

THE AMERICAN PLAN

Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, The American Plan tells the tale of an imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter, and the mysterious man who enters their lives. **Organization:** The Old Globe
Information: (619) 239-2255 **Cost:** No Details Available **Where:** Cassius Carter Centre Stage, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego, 92101, Venue Phone - (619) 239-2255

February 28, 2008

Old Globe presents West Coast Premiere of 'The American Plan'

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto and Co-Artistic Directors Jerry Patch and Darko Tresnjak are pleased to announce the West Coast premiere of "The American Plan," by Richard Greenberg ("Take Me Out, Three Days of Rain"), directed by Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage Feb. 23 – March 30.

Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg is considered one of the American theatre's greatest living playwrights. The American Plan is his funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man who enters their lives. Tickets for The American Plan are on sale now and can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe Web site at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

Old Globe to present world-premiere musical 'Dancing in the Dark' starring Scott Bakula

CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto of the Tony Award®-winning Old Globe is pleased to announce casting for the upcoming world-premiere musical Dancing In The Dark, running in the Old Globe Theatre March 4 – April 13.

Golden Globe®-winner and multi Emmy®-nominated stage and screen star Scott Bakula (Quantum Leap, American Beauty) will play the role of "Tony Hunter." Patrick Page (who just wrapped up his second season playing the title role in the Broadway production of Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!) will portray the role of "Jeffrey Cordova," and Tony Award-winner Beth Leavel (The Drowsy Chaperone) will play "Lily" in this delightful new musical based on the classic MGM movie The Band Wagon.

Dancing In The Dark revolves around Tony Hunter, a Hollywood star with a career on the wane, and Jeffrey Cordova, a Shakespearean actor-manager with a taste for high art. Together they team up with a diverse assortment of theatrical personalities to create a new musical that's strictly "entertainment." With a delightful Arthur Schwartz/Howard Dietz score packed with such classics as "A Shine on Your Shoes," that quintessential ode to show business "That's Entertainment!," and the title song, "Dancing in the Dark" – made famous by Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse in the film's memorable dance sequence – this world-premiere musical comedy will have audiences dancing in the aisles!

Tickets are available by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, online at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting The Old Globe Box Office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

Two-time Emmy Award-winner Mare Winningham to star in Old Globe's 'The Glass Menagerie'

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto is pleased to announce the cast of The Old Globe's production of The Glass Menagerie, by Tennessee Williams, directed by Joe Calarco (Lincolnesque), to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage April 12 – May 18.

Multiple award-winning actress Mare Winningham will play the role of Amanda Wingfield, Michele Federer will play Laura Wingfield, Michael Simpson will play Tom Wingfield, and Kevin Isola will play Jim O'Connor.

Tickets for The Glass Menagerie go on sale March 30 (currently available through subscription) and can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe Web site at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



Mare Winningham

March 7, 2008

Old Globe presents
West coast premiere of 'The American Plan'

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto and Co-Artistic Directors Jerry Patch and Darko Tresnjak are pleased to announce the west coast premiere of *The American Plan*, by Richard Greenberg (*Take Me Out*, *Three Days of Rain*), directed by Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage – March 30.

Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg is considered one of the American theatre's greatest living playwrights. *The American Plan* is his funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man

who enters their lives.

Tickets for *The American Plan* can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe

website at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.



March 6, 2008

Old Globe presents

West coast premiere of 'The American Plan'

Old Globe CEO/Executive Producer Lou Spisto and Co-Artistic Directors Jerry Patch and Darko Tresnjak are pleased to announce the west coast premiere of *The American Plan*, by Richard Greenberg (*Take Me Out*, *Three Days of Rain*), directed by Kim Rubinstein, to run in the Cassius Carter Centre Stage – March 30.

Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg is considered one of the American theatre's greatest living playwrights. *The American Plan* is his funny and intriguing look at deeply rooted double standards of America in the early 1960s. Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the play tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter straining against her mother's tight leash, and the mysterious young man

who enters their lives.

Tickets for *The American Plan* can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE, on the Globe

website at www.TheOldGlobe.org, or by visiting the box office at 1363 Old Globe Way in Balboa Park.

Southern California

Life50

March 2008

"The American Plan." Set in an idyllic Catskills lake retreat, the story tells the tale of an elegant and imperious German-Jewish refugee mother, her eccentric daughter who strains against her domineering mother's tight leash, and the young, mysterious man who enters their lives. Cassius Carter Centre Stage, The Old Globe Theatre, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego. Through Mar. 30. Times vary. \$42-\$59. 619-234-5623. theoldglobe.org.

March 1, 2008

"The American Plan"
「アメリカン プラン」

60年代米国上流社会の内実と若い娘の悲恋／トニー賞作家による戯曲

⑤ 1960年代初頭の夏。ニューヨーク郊外キャッツキル山麓のリゾート地。常連客としてホテルに滞在する20歳のリリー・アドラーは、心優しいハンサムな青年ニックと恋に落ちる。リリーの母親エヴァは、ドイツから亡命してきた裕福なユダヤ人で、優雅ながらも厳格な性格からホテルの従業員からは「女帝」と呼ばれていた。そんな独裁的な母親に自由を束縛されているリリーは、ニックが唯一の救済者だと確信する。2人は夏の間、ロマンティックな時間を過ごして互いに魅かれ合っていく。ところが、エヴァにとってニックは得体の知れない謎の青年でしかなく、2人の恋愛を許すことができなかった。



The American Plan / The Globe Theatres

⑥ 2003年度トニー賞最優秀作品賞受賞作「Take Me Out」の劇作家リチャード・グリーンバーグが1991年に発表した戯曲。60年代のアメリカを舞台に、優雅な外見とは異なる上流社会の内情を綴りながら、理想的な恋人とその存在を認めない頑迷な母親との狭間で苦しむ若い娘の姿を描く。

① THE GLOBE THEATRES (Cassius Carter Centre Stage), 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park / 619-239-2255(T)。期間—3/30(日)迄。上演—火・水曜: 7pm、木・金曜: 8pm、土曜: 2pm & 8pm、日曜: 2pm & 7pm。チケット—\$47 ~ \$59。
<http://www.oldglobe.org>

Theater goes crazy (times three)

by Jean Lowerison

'The American Plan'

How old are you when it's too late to start being happy?" asks the 20-something Lili (Kate Arrington) plaintively.

The maid Olivia (Sharon Hope) answers "35" but the real answer seems to be "whatever age you are" for this bunch of droopy, bored and/or crazy characters in the Catskills, some on holiday.

Lili is there with her autocratic German-accented mother Eva (Sandra Shipley), she of the "looming late Ibsenesque figure," gobs of money and a mean streak the size of Texas. They live in the imposing family home across the lake from the Borscht Belt hotels.

Lili has walked out on the pier when a waterlogged Adonis named Nick (Patrick Zeller), unaware this is private property, pulls himself out of the water. Conversation ensues ("I like the way you look," says Lili, "like nothing ever happened to you.") and romance will inevitably follow, though we will soon find out that very little is as it appears in this universe.

Richard Greenberg's *The American Plan* plays through March 30 at the Old Globe's Cassius Carter Centre Stage,

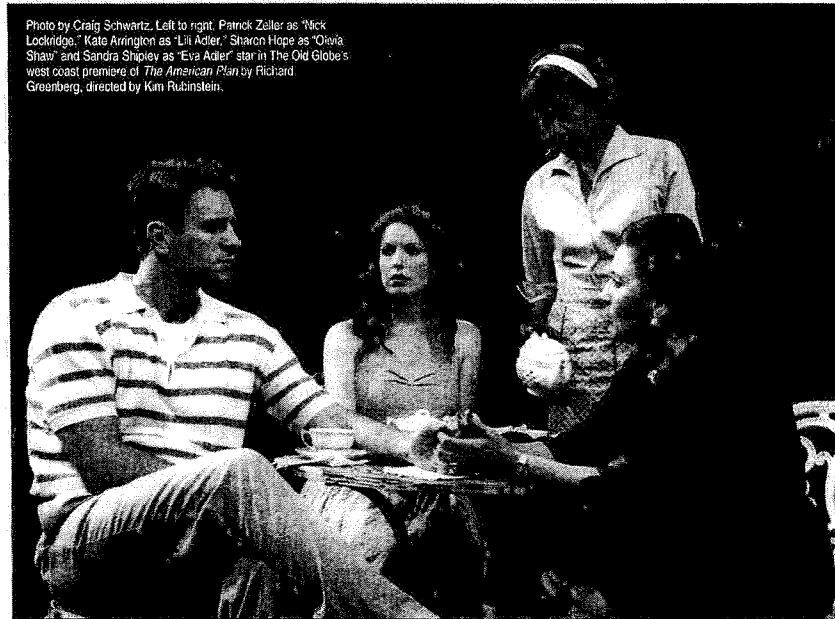


Photo by Craig Schwartz. Left to right: Patrick Zeller as "Nick Lockridge," Kate Arrington as "Lili Adler," Sharon Hope as "Olivia Shaw" and Sandra Shipley as "Eva Adler" star in the Old Globe's west coast premiere of *The American Plan* by Richard Greenberg, directed by Kim Rubinstein.

directed by UCSD's Kim Rubinstein.

Set in 1960, on the brink of major social changes, Greenberg's characters are stuck in their self-imposed boxes, perhaps desiring change, but more inclined to pretend than to do the work required to effect the transformation.

When Eva meets Nick, she leads him to believe he may be the one for Lili, and soon after is asking, "Where shall

we have the wedding?"

Predictably, this shall not come to pass. Morn does her research on the intended groom, finds him a dedicated liar (and, in fact, apparently bisexual), and that is that. The play ends in a coda in which it is clear that no one is happy.

This is Greenberg's third Old Globe appearance (his *Take Me Out* won a 2003 Tony; last season's *The Violet Hour* is the other) and in every one of his

plays (as well as a fourth I saw in New York called *The House in Town*), I left wondering why I should care about these characters. Greenberg never gives me a reason. He seldom even gives me enough information to understand the characters. Why is Eva a dragon? Why is Lili crazy? Why is Nick a liar, and why would he even consider giving up his society girlfriend for this droopy (and loopy) girl? And what's with his gay friend Gil (Michael Kirby), who seems to be a stalker?

The actors work

their hearts out, but I never got the answers, and after a while, as with all Greenberg plays, I stopped caring.

The American Plan plays through March 30 at the Old Globe's Cassius Carter Centre Stage. Plays Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; matinees Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. For tickets call 619-23-GLOBE or visit www.theoldglobe.org.

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Globe's 'Plan' a surprising human drama

By Eileen Sondak
FOR THE EAST COUNTY CALIFORNIAN

The Old Globe's Cassius Carter Stage is featuring the west coast premiere of "The American Plan" — a fascinating work by Tony Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg. "The American Plan" is set in the Catskills, a convenient getaway spot outside of New York City that was a mecca for Jewish vacationers until the 1960s. However, the play is not about typical tourist life in that pleasant mountain retreat.

It is a human drama — and black comedy — with three characters at its core: a quirky young girl, her domineering mother, and a young man whose presence in the family strains the tenuous relationship between mother and daughter and sets the play's dramatic merry-go-round in motion.

The play is full of surprising plot twists, as we learn that none of the protagonists are what they seem to be. The playwright keeps you intrigued with these emotional



Photo by Craig Schwartz

Kate Arrington and Sandra Shipley in 'The American Plan'

detours, even when the story seems a bit far-fetched.

Local audiences know Greenberg's work from his dark comedy, "Take Me Out," which takes a different look at the old ballgame. "The American Plan" plays with one of the same themes — but in an entirely different way. It appears that putting a different spin on what starts as a predictable story is Greenberg's calling card.

The title of the play refers to the three-meals-a-day accommodations most hotels in the Catskills offered their guests. Under the American plan, dining was the centerpiece of the stay. "The American Plan" takes place across the lake from that lavish lifestyle, in the summer home of Eva Adler, a haughty refugee of the Holocaust.

In one of the most exciting entrances in the history of the Cassius Carter, a young man shows up at the compound. From then on, sparks fly between Nick (Patrick Zeller) and the eccentric daughter (Kate Arrington), and later with Eya (Sandra Shipley) getting into the complex mix.

The acting is outstanding, although the quick changes in direction make all three leading roles virtuoso parts. Two other actors — Sharon Hope as the faithful servant and Michael Kirby as a not-too-welcome old friend — contribute exciting moments of their own to the piece. Under Kim Rubinstein's direction, all the characters are edgy and a little mysterious.

You might not expect the theater-in-the-round ambiance of the Cassius Carter to lend itself to a country setting (complete with a small body of water and a grassy area) but scenic designer Wilson Chin managed to make the ambiance feel right as rain.

"The American Plan" is a challenging theatrical work, but the Old Globe's top-notch ensemble makes it seem like child's play. Nevertheless, there is nothing simple about the story and the emotional depths it mines.

"The American Plan" will continue at the Cassius Carter through March 30th. Tickets can be purchased by calling (619) 23-GLOBE.