

## LOS ANGELES THEATRE REVIEWS

### Don't Look Now

November 23-29, 2006

By Madeline Shaner

Kenneth Patchen's play is a disturbing comedy, with overtones of Beckett and Kafka and a nod to Sartre, a kind of *No Exit* in Wonderland, with apologies to Ionesco, and designed by Magritte. The Worthcrofts (a nicely apoplectic Morry Schorr and streaming Angela Paul Stern), their daughter Joan (Diana Wyenn), and her husband, Gerald (Kyle Ingleman), find themselves locked in their family apartment, along with maiden Aunt Cleobel (a delicious Carol Herman); Old Horace (live-wire Carl Moebus), with his radioactive head; and Froggy (Craig Johnson), a jiggy hipster Auntie found in the park. So far, so normal, but then add a very fine jazz trio (Peter Adams, Dylan Cooper and John Wicks) to punctuate the action, and turn Chris Covics' lovingly ordered living room upside down so that all the usual domestic accoutrements are artfully attached to the ceiling. The only door is out of reach on the back wall, leaving the forlorn denizens in uneasy limbo. Kudos to Covics for a miraculous feat.

Weird situation aside, the extended family ensemble is not particularly lovable. Mr. Worthcroft is a blaming hysteric, the bane of his wife's existence, which may be the reason for her animosity toward him. Joan and Gerald seem like a sweet compatible couple, until the familial pattern reasserts itself when push comes to shove. Even dear old Cleobel, despite her striped Seussical hose and Victorian titfer, is more of a martinet than a sweet old lady. In the mounting terror, from which there is literally no way out, and with the help of the two strangers and the urgency of the growing bizarre vacuum in which sound is swallowed, there's a plethora of life games, heartfelt confessionals, psychobabble, and a general deathbed coming together as the circle of these doomed lives tightens and the music stops.

Though it's neither farce nor believable tragedy, the actors give it game to make it ring sort of true and intermittently funny, if just a tad over the top and not always comprehensible to the naked ear. Patchen's dialogue leans toward the nonsensical side of logorrhea, but Covics' direction keeps it mostly together in a mad kind of way, as down the swell jazz trio.

Presented by and at Unknown Theater, 1110 N. Seward St., L.A. Thu.-Sat. 8p.m., Sun. 6p.m. Nov. 10-Dec. 17. (323) 466-7781. [www.unknowntheater.com](http://www.unknowntheater.com).