
BY PHILIP BRANDES

'Diana' samples life at Antaeus

The essentials: Antaeus Theatre Company finds timely relevance in this unfairly neglected 1908 romantic comedy by Cicely Hamilton, an early British feminist and suffragette crusader. When an impoverished Dobson's Department Store shopgirl unexpectedly inherits a modest fortune, she faces a kind of "Dobson's Choice": Budget the funds to sustain a dull but marginally better lifestyle, or indulge in a monthlong vacation at a Swiss resort. She selects the 1% option, and, posing as a high-born socialite in a foreshadowing of *Eliza Doolittle*, she meets cute with a charming but lackadaisical former guardsman.

Why this? In her time, Hamilton ranked alongside her friend and colleague George Bernard Shaw with her skillful writing and keenly observed social commentary. Despite its comic format, her play tackles serious issues concerning Edwardian class barriers and the de facto indentured servitude imposed on women of no independent means. This period piece is well suited to Antaeus' stable of classically trained performers.

Details: An Antaeus production at the Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center, 110 E. Broadway, Glendale. 8 p.m. Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays; ends June 3. \$35. (818) 506-1983, antaeus.org