

1950's taboos on stage

A Taste of Honey, written by Shelagh Delaney, opened on the West End in London in 1958. It was later made into a movie starring Rita Tushingham. The story covered an array of taboo (in the day) themes including: inter-racial relationships, teenage parenthood, homosexuality and mother-daughter tensions. The story centers on Jo (Kestrel Leah), an adolescent girl struggling to survive with her mother Helen (Sarah Underwood Saviano), and Helen's new husband Peter (Eric Hunicutt). Jimmie (Gerard Joseph), a sailor on leave, seduces Jo, leaves her pregnant, and returns to his ship. It's Geoffrey (Leland Montgomery), a homosexual art student, who sees her through the pregnancy with love and common sense. Kudos to this excellent cast who have mastered the harsh British dialect but can still be understood. Ms. Leah's superb performance as Jo gives

us the vulnerability and energy of an adolescent without falling into stereotypes. This excellent cast doubles on various instruments to play back-up music. Worth noting are Ms. Saviano's saxophone solos. Director Kim Rubinstein has kept the beats clear and the action tight. There is some onstage smoking.

Through Nov. 27, Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., 310-477-2055, ext 2, OdysseyTheatre.com. 3 Stars

Theater
Review
by
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