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A fine cast in a superb play—‘Our Man in Santiago’ a look back at recent history from Theatre West

Review by Laura Voeth



Michael Van Duzer as Henry Kissinger and Steve Nevil as Richard Nixon in “Our Man in Santiago” recently on stage at Theatre West. Credit: Charlie Mount

When playwright Mark Wilding was just a teen, he read an article in *Harper’s Magazine* about the United States’ cockamamie attempt to overthrow Chile’s leader Salvador Allende in 1970, by sending 200 “government overthrow specialists” there masquerading as a Navy chorus. Unfortunately, many of these “singers” couldn’t carry a tune, so the mission was spectacularly botched. Wilding was so fascinated by this story that some 45 years later he wrote *Our Man in Santiago*, a fictional account of what may have led to Allende’s topple from power.

His work has all the elements that make a play great: comedy, drama, intrigue, farce and first-rate character development. Oh, and violence and sex, of course! And, as a member of Theatre West, he has access to some of the finest talent around.

Nick McDow Musleh is brilliant as Daniel Baker, the bright but unsuspecting CIA agent who is thrown to the wolves. As Jack Wilson, George Tovar could not be better--the man you love to hate, cocky yet sympathetic at times. Prescilia Esparolini (Maria the maid) demonstrates flawless comic timing, as well as touching compassion. And who will forget Steve Nevil as President Nixon and Michael Van Duzer as Henry Kissinger with their uproarious banter and farcical impressions of these two normally somber gentlemen. They were a scream!

Charlie Mount’s direction made the action move along at a fast clip. And the set, designed by Jeff G. Rack was elegant, yet functional.

Unfortunately, due to the current health situation, performances are postponed until further notice.