

by TRAVIS MICHAEL HOLDER

Sex, Lies and Harold Pinter



Photo by Jacques Lorch

Odyssey Theatre

The coolest part of this evening of two seldom performed Pinter one-acts, performed under the banner *Sex, Lies and Harold Pinter*, is the crackling smart and most welcome revival of *The Lover*, his original 1962 playlet for television written for his wife Vivien Merchant.

Directed by veteran master regisseur Jack Heller and starring Ron Botitta and Susan Priver, two of LA's sturdiest and most prolific performers, this lovely and tasty little theatrical morsel subtly attacking the bored bourgeoisie of the times by delving into their kinkiest secret sexual desires, could not be much better.

With a grandly Caligari-esque expressionistic set by Joel Daavid, Pinter's bitinglly urbane dark comedy sizzles in the hands of Heller and his talented pawns, who clearly understand how to play material that remains brutally corrosive just underneath the fine silks and satins and swirling scotch in his thinly-veiled send-up of British manners and pretentious civility.

Heller's crisply effervescent staging of *The Lover* is a quintessential textbook example of how to play the always challenging dialogue of Pinter, how to make these mannered characters real and hilariously devilish without falling into the many massive traps inherent in any script by one of the latter half of the 20th century's most unstoppable and groundbreaking wordsmiths.

THROUGH APR. 26: Odyssey Theatre, 2055 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West LA. 310.477.2055 or OdysseyTheatre.com