

## THE SHOWBUZZ

By Sean McMullen  
CORRESPONDENT

Across town, the question of forgiveness arrives without ceremony and without tea.

At International City Theatre, inside the Beverly O'Neill Theater, the world premiere of "Warsaw" begins not with language, but with absence.

A woman lies in a hospital bed, unconscious after a devastating accident. Around her gather four individuals, each carrying a different version of her, each waiting for something that may never come.

Playwright Paul Webb, best known for his work on the film "Selma," trades historical sweep for emotional excavation. Under the careful direction of Caryn Desai, the play unfolds with a deliberate patience that at times borders on stillness, and then boom, the quiet fuse that had been crack-

ing away out of sight explodes in a flurry of stunningly crafted grief. Secrets are not revealed so much as uncovered, slowly, reluctantly, as if each character is unsure whether the truth will offer relief or further decimate what remains.

The performances are grounded and, at their best, deeply affecting. Anna Van Valin masterfully guides us through a landscape of emotional devastation. Suzanne Ford brings a gravity to the proceedings, while Bruce Nozick navigates the uneasy terrain between regret and self-preservation.

The script occasionally leans heavily on coincidence, the idea that one woman could serve as the missing piece for so many lives, but the emotional logic holds. We recognize the impulse: to seek forgiveness from someone who may never to grant it.

### IF YOU GO 'WARSAW'

**Where:** International City Theatre, 330 E. Seaside Way.

**When:** Runs through May 17.

**Cost:** Thursday, Friday, Saturday showings start at \$56; Sunday showings start at \$59.

**Info:** [ictlongbeach.org](http://ictlongbeach.org).