

Search...

News

Events

Commentary

Causes

Entertainment

Social

Health, Wellness & Sports

Advertise

Directory

Subscribe

Subscribe

Friday, May 4th, 2018

[Home](#) > [Entertainment](#) > Theater Review: "Bliss (or Emily Post is Dead)"

February 12th, 2018

Theater Review: "Bliss (or Emily Post is Dead)"

by **Jean Lowerison - SDGLN Theater critic** ARTS & CULTURE



Photo credit:
Karli Cardel Photography

[“Bliss” is at Moxie Theatre through Feb. 25.](#)

Sometimes people mess up their own lives. Sometimes the culture, the time, and social norms do it for them.

In Jami Brandli’s “Bliss” set in 1960, before the civil rights and women’s rights movements got air under their wings, three women who feel like “indentured servants” are victims of Emily Post and the prevailing regressive attitudes about women.

“Bliss” is at Moxie Theatre through Feb. 25, as part of a joint world premiere with Moving Arts at Atwater Village Theatre in Los Angeles and Chicago’s Promethean Theatre.

Emily Post’s 1945 book “Etiquette” set the norms of behavior for women. So, of course, did the much earlier Greek mythology, and “Bliss” combines the two, implying an anti-women double whammy keeping women in their place.

The women have modern names that hearken back to their mythological counterparts. Homemaker Maddy (Medea) is the quintessential Emily Post hostess, scheduling tea for the ladies once a week without fail, even though they send regrets every time. Only next-door neighbor -- pill-popping Clementine (Clytemnestra) -- shows up. Maybe it’s because Maddy (Lydia Lea Real) burns the crumpets every single time.

Clementine (Morgan Carberry) is a cynical, bored housewife who has found respite with her doctor and is looking for a way to get rid of her husband.

Antonia (Antigone) is a teen who has just met a boy and wants to go to the school dance, but her mean guardian/uncle won’t let her.

One day, Antonia (Taylor Linekin) brings her “new friend” Cassandra (Alexandra Slade) to tea. Cassandra is a seriously weird black chick who spouts crazy prophecies on no provocation.

Cassandra has some history with Apollo (the hunky Steve Froehlich), who shows up nearly naked in a white

and has never forgiven Cassandra for refusing to sleep with him all those years ago. She didn't feel like it. And she objected to the many rapes he had committed.

"Rape," he sniffs. "Rape is so subjective."

So he gave her a gift (prophecy) and a curse: no one will believe her.

Cassandra tries to get the others to flout convention and start thinking (and acting) for themselves, even encouraging Antonia's relationship with a black student (remember, this is New Jersey in 1960, before....everything).

This production boasts four Moxie debuts (all the women), and each is outstanding. Lydia Lea Real is a ditz, but a charming one. Carberry's Clementine is oh-so-sophisticated in her ennui and snarkiness. Linekin, a high school senior, is impressive in her debut as Antonia. And Slade's Cassandra provides just the shake-things-up energy needed in all-white, conservative North Orange. And Froehlich is terrific as Apollo and as Clementine's doctor.

Production values are high. Victoria Petrovich's three-room side-by-side set (one each for Antonia, Maddy and Clementine) – and each a different bright color – is stunning.

Shelly Williams' costumes – especially for Maddy – are wonderful and so evocative of the time. And Missy Bradstreet's wigs! Brilliant. Christina J. Martin's lighting and Matt Lescault-Wood's sound designs are terrific as well.

The script calls this "Part One of Reclaimed Greek Myth Cycle." I hope Brandli does continue in this vein. "Bliss" is fun.

The details

"Bliss (or Emily Post is Dead)" plays through February 25, 2018, at Moxie Theatre, 6663 El Cajon Blvd. in the SDSU area.

Thursday at 7 p.m.; Friday and Saturday at 8 pm; Sunday at 2 pm.

Tickets: (858) 598-7620 or www.moxietheatre

Tags: [Jean Lowerison](#)

NEWSLETTER

Sign up for the San Diego Gay & Lesbian News newsletter

Opt in below to receive the latest SDGLN updates and news stories right in your inbox!

SIGN UP NOW

BACK TO TOP

ABOUT US

ADVERTISE

DIRECTORY

SAN DIEGO PIX

SAN DIEGO PRIDE

CONTACT US

DISCLAIMER

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

© Copyright 2018 Hale Media, Inc.
