

# Re-viewing 2 That Moved

BY LEE MELVILLE

## The Fox

Produced by Laura Zucker & Allan Miller in association with the L.A. Stage Co., 1642 N. Las Palmas, Hollywood; 461-2755. Opened July 15; plays Tues.-Fri., 8:30; Sat., 7 & 10; Sun., 7:30; through Aug. 30.

In an editorial which appeared in *Drama-Logue* dated July 2-8, 1981 (Vol. XII, No. 27) I made the statement that "not one waiver production, so far, this year has moved to a larger house." In less than two weeks afterwards, two productions moved to mid-size theatres. Husband/wife producing team John Clark and Lynn Redgrave transferred their production of Loleh Bellon's *Thursday's Girls* from a short but successful run at the Odyssey (reviewed by Terry Fisher in issue 25) to the Coronet last Thursday. A day earlier Allan Miller and Laura Zucker reopened the stage version (by Miller) of D.H. Lawrence's *The Fox*, which had a three-month sold out stay at the Back Alley Theatre in Van Nuys (reviewed by Charles Faber in issue 12); their new home is the L.A. Stage Company in Hollywood.

Seeing both plays for the second time, there are some obvious comparisons. Each is directed by the male half of its producing team; both deal primarily with women's emotions and how they are affected by a man. But, most particularly, both have survived their transitional move quite well and are, in fact, the better for having done it. Both are enjoying comfortable, air-conditioned theatres with ample space and facilities; both should be seen.



Photos by Ed Krueger

Kathleen Lloyd, Michael Horton and Gretchen Corbett star in Allan Miller's "The Fox"

The Sunday performance of *The Fox* played to 200-225 people at the reconverted Las Palmas Theatre which has 348 seats. The median age was about 20 years younger than the Coronet audience. *The Fox* should attract audiences of all ages but my guess is the greatest appeal will be to the college to mid-40 age bracket. The theatre embellishes the warm atmosphere conveyed by the well-designed setting of an English farm house. The Lawrence story of two women, living together in the year 1918 in a rather desolate area, who encounter a young man fresh from the war fields, is essentially retained in Miller's adaptation. There is a frightening fascination in the writing as we see these three people's lives intertwine. Miller's precise and taut direction creates the framework in which the actors transform this pastoral painting into stark, riveting realism. The two actresses are different from those seen at the Back Alley. Gretchen Corbett gives Jill, who appears to be the weaker of the two women, perception and strength that cause the intruding soldier to realize she sees beyond his boyish charm. Corbett is fascinating to observe. Kathleen Lloyd plays two performances per week while Jenny O'Hara, who originated the role of Nellie, does the other six. Lloyd's interpretation, though different from O'Hara's haunting power, is equally valid. Her Nellie is amused by Henry at first though she is also bothered and even irritated by him. Later, he mesmerizes her. Lloyd's transitions are beautifully portrayed; she gives an exceptional performance. Michael Horton has grown immeasurably in his subtle shadings of the young soldier Henry. His was a powerfully stunning performance at the Back Alley and remains so, with additional depth and underlying danger that is not as much noticed as felt. The three actors build to a startling yet necessary climax. This world premiere production of *The Fox* is a magnificent theatre experience.

It was necessary for these plays to move, not only for the good of Los Angeles theatre but because they are worthy experiences that need to be shared with more people. *Thursday's Girls* will probably have a tougher time