

Inside: L.A.'s Biggest Guide To Movies, Music & Fun

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Theater

MAJOR THEATERS

THE FOX Allan Miller's adaptation of D.H. Lawrence's novella was a great success in its extended run at the Back Alley Theater, and it is certain to be equally successful in its new home at the larger L.A. Stage Company. In an English farmhouse in the winter of 1918, two women have secluded themselves, determined to make a life together on their own terms. Nellie, the tougher of the two, runs their failing farm. Jill, the more "feminine" and dependent partner, runs the house. The bane of their existence is a fox, a preying male animal who carries off their chickens, a prowler Nellie has been unable to shoot, despite her earnest efforts.

But their lives are shattered by another male intruder, a young man back from the war, Mr. Macho himself, imposing his will on theirs. Boyish and attractive, the very picture of male arrogance, he screams "I am a man!" with such pride it is as if he were proclaiming himself king. His will changes Jill from a shy flower to a stern woman. And Nellie changes from men's knickers to white ruffles and pumps. And in the end, his determination to win destroys them both.

Lawrence's story operates on many levels, and in adapting it for the stage, Miller has had to make choices. But whatever he may have sacrificed in the process, he has succeeded both as writer and director in creating truly riveting theater. The pacing, dramatic tension and rhythm are so well-planned and well-constructed as to keep the audience utterly rapt. And the acting is excellent. Gretchen Corbett, Michael Horton and Kathleen Lloyd (who alternates in the role of Nellie with Jenny O'Hara) all give powerful performances. This is theater of a high caliber that can stand up to any production anywhere.

L.A. Stage Company, 1642 N. Las Palmas; Tues.-Fri., 8:30 p.m.; Sat., 7 & 10 p.m.; Sun., 7:30 p.m. Call Mutual, Ticketron or 461-2755.

-Joie Davidow