



Allan Miller as Abe Burrows in "Are You Now"; rear left, Frank Aletter, John Medici, Sam Vincent.

ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN

Subtitled "The Investigation of Show Business by the Un-American Activities Committee, 1947-1958," this is a chilling reminder of how the government and media can collude for purposes of intimidation and public chest-pounding.

In the name of routing the Red menace, the House Un-American Activities Committee bullied and cajoled witnesses into informing on friends and dishonoring themselves. The committee comes to vivid life here through the text of actual hearings, and we see both the famous and the forgotten endure humiliation as each tries, in playwright (and witness) Arthur Miller's words, "to protect my sense of myself."

The parade of witnesses balances honor against expediency: some are all too willing to testify, while others risk jail terms and ruined careers by refusing to name names and answer the key question, "Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?"

It is an ugly business, yet there is humor in it: actor-director Allan Miller's Abe Burrows is hilarious, as is John Medici's Marc Lawrence. Eric Bentley's play is historic drama at its best, and the superb cast (directed by Miller and Laura Zucker) enlivens it with an immediacy that makes this not only an important production but an entertaining one as well.

L.A. Life, Daily News—July 1, 1984 19