

ENTERTAINMENT DAY & NIGHT

Theater review

Some unanswered questions in this play

By Jack Matcha

Special to the GVN

"What's Wrong With This Picture," the new play at the Back Alley Theatre, in Van Nuys is, again, a play at once well written and yet lacking in certain necessities. But this one has so much humor that it is quite entertaining.

Basically what happens is that a recently deceased woman rejoins her husband, son and assorted relatives as they grieve for her. The tone in Donald Margulies' play is light and there are a flock of interesting characters in it.

Sandy Kenyon is hilarious as the elderly father-in-law who is hardly aware that the

deceased Shirley has been away, playing the absent-minded character so deftly that he keeps the house in chuckles throughout.

As Shirley, Phoebe Dorin is so attractive and full of so much energy that you see why the family misses her. Excellent work is done by Allan Miller as her widowed spouse, Patti Deutsch as her sister-in-law, Lillian Adams as her acerbic mother-in-law. Her son, Artie in James Stern's portrayal, seems too unconcerned with his mother's death. Stuart Damon's direction is competent.

What's lacking? Well for starters we are never told why

Shirley comes back or why she leaves. One can surmise that she returned to set in order the affairs of a disorganized clan, but it's only an educated guess.

Secondly here is a truly startling event but the family seems to take it much too mildly and never ask the obvious questions about why? How? and so on. Still, as I said, the show is an entertaining one and with some extra work, the playwright can add the ingredients mentioned.

"What's Wrong With This Picture," will play at the theatre through May 15. It is located at 15231 Burbank Blvd.