

THE THEATER MIRROR, New England's LIVE Theater Guide

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The Weeks of Knee Brace II

Wednesday 22 - Saturday 25 February:

"Covered"

22 feb THE POSSIBILITIES Whistler in The Dark CHARLESTOWN WORKING 15
23 feb FLESH AND BLOOD Zeitgeist BCA 16
24 feb SET IN SAND 11:11 Theatre Company BOSTON PLAYWRIGHTS' 17
25 feb TAPE As Yet To Be COMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON 18

Three of the four shows I got to this week were done by companies that have worked here in Boston for a year or less, and one of them (the first) called itself "Boston's newest". That claim will be true until the very end of March, when an even Newer newest company will follow this one into the same performing space. The Charlestown Working Theatre, pleasantly renovated not long ago, may soon make a serious reputation as a home for Cutting Edge Theater here in Boston.

Here's the week's harvest:

22 feb THE POSSIBILITIES Whistler in The Dark CHARLESTOWN WORKING THEATRE

The Whistler in The Dark company came here from Washington DC in search of an adventurous and youthful audience ready to experience theatrical theater relevant to both contemporary issues and human situations. Their Exhibit A is "The Possibilities" by English playwright Howard Barker --- a series of small scenes loosely involving war, revolution, oppression, and social justice. In one reminiscent of the situation in Iraq for instance, workers doggedly weaving a rug through a bombardment outside feel "The Weaver's Ecstasy at the Discovery of New Colour" when a batch of white wool falls into a pool of blood. In "Not Him" a limping soldier may or may not be an eager wife's long

absent spouse. A "Philosophical Lieutenant and Three Village Women" debate logically --- until knives and passions end all conversation. Again and again in these ten playlets, presumptions squirm around and find new, surprising truths.

Seven performers on a bare stage use very specific props --- a chair or two, a table and glasses, a weaving-frame --- to sketch-in scenes. Between them, actors carefully re-arrange bits of costume and physical stance before announcing the new scene's title. (Sound Engineer Brendan Tidwell Collen has managed to make the floor tremble at every shell's explosion!) The details are expressively specific, the confrontations direct and explosive, and the result feels expressionist and realistic at the same time.

Director Meg Taintor assembled a young, intense cast of vibrant performers, and Lighting Designer Andrew Dickey alternated shadowy between-scene interludes with clearly defined area-lighting, and everything about the evening reached a level of professional purity. But on that particular Wednesday evening the company gave a riveting performance for an audience of --- one. Surely the Whistler in The Dark deserves better than this from Boston, don't you think?