



THEATER REVIEWS

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE There's wonderful irony in the fact that, though Oscar Wilde's enemies succeeded in branding him a sodomist, and sentencing him to two years' hard labor, they accidentally conferred upon him a kind of posthumous glory, fame and historical importance he probably wouldn't have achieved otherwise. Writer Moises Kaufman captures the tale's ironies and complexities by taking an objective, documentary approach, and constructing his play as a mosaic of primary sources: court records, personal letters, autobiographies, memoirs and newspaper accounts. Susan Lee directs with brisk, efficient clarity, and Kerr Seth Lordygan contributes a serviceable if slightly colorless portrait of Wilde. Though Wilde's friend and lover, Lord Alfred "Bosie" Douglas, was an obnoxious egotist, he must have had considerable charm and glamour to have captured Wilde's love and loyalty, but Joshua Grant plays him as charmless, petulant and prissy. Andrew Hagan is persuasive as Wilde's nemesis, the malicious, paranoid Marquess of Queensbury, and Darrell Philip and Dean Farell Bruggeman score as the rival attorneys. The notion of casting women (Casey Kramer, Allie Costa, Beth Ricketson and JC Henning) as Oscar's "rent boys" seemed initially perverse, but they provide deft characterizations and sly comedy. The Eclectic Company Theatre, 5312 Laurel Canyon Boulevard, N. Hollywood; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 7 p.m., through Oct. 11. (818) 508-3003 or brownpapertickets.com/event/77200. (Neal Weaver)