

INSIDER VIEWS: A message about *The Little Dog Laughed*

In performance at the Kirk Douglas Theatre from Nov 16 through Dec 21

Pier Carlo Talenti, Center Theatre Group's Resident Dramaturg and Literary Manager, is intimately involved in the development of many productions presented on our stages. He is an integral part of the research process, providing historical and social context for each work and keeping an independent and critical eye on our creative activities. In this issue of INSIDER VIEWS, he discusses *The Little Dog Laughed*, Douglas Carter Beane's biting and all-too-realistic satire of Hollywood insiders.



Hello:

Sometimes, I have to say, it's hard not to love the most hateful people. As long as they're onstage and at a safe distance from you. When early in Shakespeare's masterpiece, we see Richard III not only woo but win the widow of a man he's recently murdered, we could say, "This man is repulsive. I need to get out of here." Instead, though, we tend to think, "Who is this guy? I better stick around because things are going to get even more interesting." The fourth wall makes things a little safer, of course, but wouldn't you know it, Richard sometimes has this really upsetting way of looking straight at us and telling us what's on his mind.

Diane, the formidable character at the heart of *The Little Dog Laughed*, also has an unnerving way of speaking right to us, unnerving because...well...she's a little scary. Think Richard III with a Blackberry and in a pencil skirt but with a killer sense of humor. Since this razor-sharp satire sprang from the mind of impossibly witty and polished playwright Douglas Carter Beane, it's guaranteed to make you laugh even as your jaw drops in a "No, she didn't!" gasp.

I'm particularly excited that the originator of the part, the incredible Julie White, will reprise the role that won her a Tony for Best Actress. A few times in our lives, if we're lucky, we get to see the defining marriage of an actor with a role. I was fortunate enough to see Janet McTeer play Nora in *A Doll's House* on Broadway several years ago, David Morse as Uncle Peck in the original production of *How I Learned to Drive*, and Phylicia Rashad as Aunt Ester in *Gem of the Ocean* at the Taper. I very much hope to see many more productions of all three plays, but I'm fairly certain that the roles I mentioned will in my mind always belong to these three actors. As you will see, Julie White owns Diane, and I'm fairly sure she's going to keep you riveted and stay with you. Like that itch you love to scratch.

I also find it delicious that we are producing *The Little Dog Laughed*, a hilariously vicious Hollywood satire, within a stone's throw of one major movie studio and just a few miles from many, many more. It feels like a homecoming of sorts for

the play. And lest you think as you're sitting through the play that it feels too over-the-top, that these things don't really happen in the movie biz these days, just know that Mr. Beane is on record as saying that all of Diane's monologues are based very concretely on conversations he had with movie folk when he was living in Los Angeles and was asked to adapt one of his plays for the screen.

So although you may love her or at least love to hate her, just remember, unlike Richard III, Diane probably shops at the same Whole Foods as you. And she's liable to cut in line.

Thank you.

Pier Carlo Talenti
Resident Dramaturg / Literary Manager

Insider Views is the Kirk Douglas Theatre's newsletter. There is no regular schedule or standard format for it. You'll receive it from time to time, when we have interesting, relevant or breaking news about our productions at the Douglas.

Announcing the Lounge: a place to gather before and after performances. The newly designed lobby bar area will feature snacks and pre-show meals from [Ugo, An Italian Cafe](#). Open late night after performances on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights with full bar and music.

Find out more:

[The Little Dog Laughed](#)

Nov 16 - Dec 21, 2008

Kirk Douglas Theatre

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