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# Theater

Time Out New York / Issue 685 : Nov 13-19, 2008

## Theater review

### Bury the Dead

Critic's Rating

**Connelly Theatre.** By Irwin Shaw. Dir. Joe Calarco. With ensemble cast. 1hr 40mins. No intermission.

### Blogs

#### The TONY Blog

##### mtvU Woodie Awards

Published at 3:50pm

I've got a bone to pick with MTV. When I was growing up in the 1990s, the channel used to actually—try hard to remember—play music videos and, believe it or not, introduce...

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When the Group Theatre premiered it on Broadway in 1936, Irwin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* must have already seemed timeless. Set amid a generic foreign conflict, the play presents, in bracingly plainspoken terms, an iconic conceit—six dead American GIs stand up in protest and refuse to be buried—and mines it more for human drama than political significance.

Although it is bluntly antiwar, the most compelling moments of *Bury the Dead* plumb existential dilemmas (class, mortality, social responsibility) that transcend life during wartime.

Transport Group's valiant new revival frames the piece within a town hall meeting led by a cheery Middle American music teacher (Donna Lynne Champlin, laying it on a little thick). Piqued by news of Iraq War casualties, she proposes a reading of Shaw's play and recruits an all-male cast from actors planted among the audience. Before long, these performers have taken over the stage and transformed into the disgruntled grunts themselves. Champlin looks on, alternately rapt and aghast; later, she heroically plays the female relatives and romantic partners of each soldier in turn.

Joe Calarco's excellent ensemble and designers masterfully blur and scramble the material; imagine the stark-staring WWI doughboys from the curtain call of *Journey's End* wandering through *Our Town*. That may not make for an edge-of-your-seat bulletin from the front. But at its best, *Bury the Dead* emerges as a social-realist stage poem on the tests that every generation faces, in war or in peace.

— Rob Weinert-Kendt



FIGHTING WORD'S Mandell Butler, Champlin and Fred Berman, from left, share soldiers' stories. Photograph: Carroll Rosegg

## Theater

### Les Mouches, Part I: Patti LuPone makes a Splash

Published on 11/10/08

The name *Splash* doesn't do justice to the tidal wave of love that greeted Patti LuPone last week when she made a "surprise" guest appearance at the Chelsea gay...

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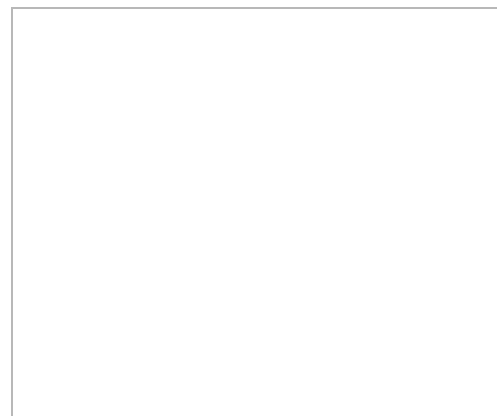
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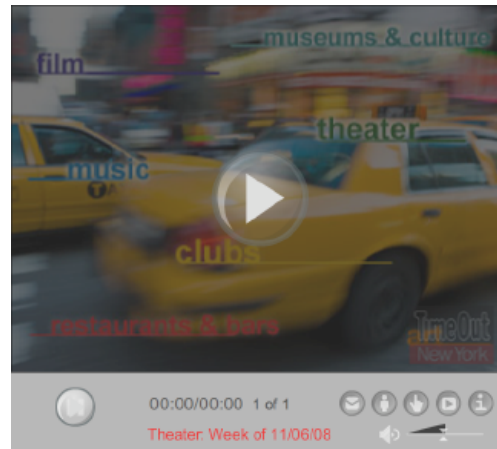
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