

NEWS REVIEWS VIDEO BLOGS CHARTS FEATURES PEOPLE PROFILES AWARDS FESTIVALS CAREERS PHOTOS CALENDARS

GO Powered By

Mobile

Contact Us

Newsletter Signup

Home Delivery

Digital Variety

Log In

LEGIT

Posted: Sun., Nov. 9, 2008, 6:00pm PT

TALK BACK! DIGE EMAIL PRINT CONTACT RSS

Off Broadway

Bury the Dead

(Connelly Theater; 99 seats; \$38 top)

By MARILYN STASIO

A Transport Group Theater presentation of a play in one act by Irwin Shaw, with additional material by Joe Calarco. Directed by Calarco.

Host - Donna Lynne Champlin
Private Schelling - Jeremy Beck
Private Levy - Fred Berman
Private Dean - Mandell Butler
Private Webster - Jake Hart
Private Driscoll - Jeff Pucillo
Private Morgan - Matt Sincell



Jake Hart and Donna Lynne Champlin star in Joe Calarco's revival of 'Bury the Dead' Irwin Shaw's 1936 anti-war play.

Hard to believe Irwin Shaw wrote "Bury the Dead" in 1936, between the War to End All Wars and all the wars to come. The angry, searing pacifist drama feels as up-to-date and urgent as an incoming text message. To pump up the sense of immediacy of this enduring classic, helmer Joe Calarco has written a framework it doesn't really need. But after a fumbling start at stitching both pieces together, Calarco and his well-drilled ensemble (a hallmark of the estimable Transport Group) settle down to the harrowing task of guiding us through Shaw's hellish nightmare.

Pointedly opening "two years into the war that is to begin tomorrow night," Shaw's expressionistic masterpiece makes a mockery of the pseudo-patriotic war-mongering of belligerent nations by giving a voice to the foot soldiers who pay for the war games their leaders play.

The revolt is all the more horrifying for being impromptu. A platoon of dead soldiers refuses to go into the graves being prepared for them by a military burial detail. One by one they stand up in resistance, demanding to be heard, pleading for their lost lives. "I'm only 20," one of them says, making his case without wasting a word.

Unable to contain the spreading word of the rebellion, the military brass tries to crush it by first ordering and then begging the soldiers to accept their fate and toddle off to their graves. When that has no effect, they call up the big guns -- the women.

One by one they come, the wives, mothers, sisters and sweethearts of the fallen soldiers, and in the most riveting of the play's multiple scenes, they plead for explanations that will help them understand the "unnatural" behavior of their men. More than Shaw's agitprop declarations and his clarion calls for political action, these quietly heartbreaking scenes are the real meat of the play.

Called upon to play the cameo roles that more than 30 actors undertook in the Group Theater's original Broadway production, seven stalwart Transport Group members shoulder them all. They work seamlessly as an ensemble, but you can almost hear them sigh with relief when they are allowed to settle into one role and get to the heart of that character's argument for more life beyond an early death.

Donna Lynne Champlin, who plays all the weeping, angry and despairing women, is especially rewarded by the breathing space. She is moving as the wife of the farmer who longs to see another spring (beautiful job from Jeremy Beck), sadder still as the mother of that 20-year-old boy, and quite rousing as the mechanic's wife who yells at him for waiting until he was dead before taking a stand against the many injustices of his life.

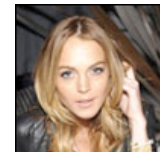
The simplicity and directness of Shaw's language are not only more suitable for corpses than windy speeches, they are also more effective at delivering the scribe's angry message. "They should be alive now." "Kids shouldn't be dead." "I got big important things to say" are pretty devastating lines to hear in this context.

To their credit, Beck, Matt Sincell, Fred Berman, Jake Hart, Jeff Pucillo and Mandell Butler (who comes into his

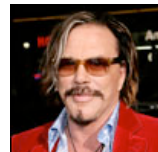
MOBILE.VARIETY.COM
Get Variety's latest news, reviews and box office data on your mobile.

-- Advertisement --

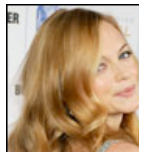
PHOTO GALLERY



Dsquared2 And W
Event - L.A.



The Wrestler - AFI
Premiere



BAFTA/LA -
Britannia Award

PARTIES > RED CARPETS > ALL PHOTOS >

VIDEO:

Robert Pattinson - Interview
Visit Website 15:38

Movie Trailers

- Robert Pattinson - Interview 15:38
- Angels & Demons - Trailer 01:09
- Monsters vs. Aliens 02:30
- Friday the 13th - Trailer 01:34
- Bride Wars - Movie Trailer 02:29

ALL TRAILERS >

own as the baby soldier) all succeed at creating distinct characters for their admittedly iconic soldier-boy roles. As directed by Calarco, the all-important reunion scenes have a stillness to them that intensifies their emotional impact and makes the strongest argument for Shaw's anti-war themes.

As for that original framing idea from Calarco -- a town hall meeting at which a jittery community organizer (a less certain Champlin) urges her neighbors to join the soldiers' anti-war protest -- it isn't at all bad. But this civics lesson feels abbreviated (in the sketchy writing), confusing (in the absence of true characters) and imperfectly defined (by the primitive lighting).

Who are we? Where are we? And what is expected of us? That's all we need to know from a framework. With additional work, this one could yet do its job.

Set, Sandra Goldmark; costumes, Kathryn Rohe; lighting, R. Lee Kennedy; sound, Michael Rasbury; production stage manager, Wendy Patten. Opened Nov. 9, 2008. Reviewed Nov. 6. Running time: 1 HOUR, 40 MIN.

Variety is striving to present the most thorough review database. To report inaccuracies in review credits, please [click here](#). We do not currently list below-the-line credits, although we hope to include them in the future. Please note we may not respond to every suggestion. Your assistance is appreciated.

Date in print: Mon., Nov. 10, 2008, Gotham      

TALKBACK:

[VIEW ALL DISCUSSIONS](#) | [COMMENT ON THIS REVIEW](#)

Have an opinion about this article? Be the first to [comment](#)

2009 AWARD SEASON CONTENDERS

We don't pretend to know who will emerge as the winners in this awards season. However, every year has its frontrunners and dark horses and we already have a pretty good idea of who they will be. Here's our take on the top five categories.

All Contenders

- Best Picture
- Best Director
- Best Screenplay
- Best Actor
- Best Actress

RECENT REVIEWS:

Mouth to Mouth - 11/6/2008 6:00:00 PM

Things to Ruin: The Songs of Joe Iconis - 11/3/2008 2:46:34 PM

Beachwood Drive - 10/29/2008 7:13:39 PM

The Language of Trees - 10/29/2008 5:30:00 PM

The Grand Inquisitor - 10/29/2008 5:30:00 PM

Romantic Poetry - 10/28/2008 6:00:00 PM

Ads By Google

Movie Fan?

Tropic Thunder - A Must Own Comedy! Get The Unrated Director's Cut Now.
www.tropictThunder.com

The Twilight Quiz

So you think you know Twilight? Take the Twilight Quiz & prove it!
Quiz-Challenge.com

Pittsburgh Trailers

We Provide A Variety of Trailers & Custom Options. Contact Us Today.
www.MRenoTrailers.com

-- Advertisement --



Featured Jobs

Director of Programming - RCN
Herndon, Virginia

President - Neighbouring Rights Collective of Canada
Toronto, Canada

Web Developer/Technical Producer - NESN
Watertown, MA

Editorial Manager - HBO, Inc.
New York, NY

KEYWORDS:

CITY, STATE:

[THEBIZ.VARIETY.COM >](http://THEBIZ.VARIETY.COM)

RELATED SITES: [Variety Asia](#) [Variety Japan](#) [Video Business](#) [ContentAgenda](#) [Stylephile](#) [LA 411](#) [NY 411](#) [Entertainment Jobs](#)

© 2008  Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Use of this website is subject to its [Terms & Conditions of Use](#). View our [Privacy Policy](#).

MEDIA & PUBLISHING:

[Variety](#) | [Variety Asia](#) | [Variety Japan](#) | [LA 411](#) | [New York 411](#) | [Video Business](#) | [ContentAgenda](#) | [Broadcasting & Cable](#) | [Multichannel News](#) | [Publishers Weekly](#) | [Library Journal](#) | [School Library Journal](#) | [Criticas](#) | [Tradeshow Week](#)

MANUFACTURING:

[Design News](#) | [Control Engineering](#) | [Plant Engineering](#) | [Purchasing](#) | [Purchasing Data](#) | [Logistics Management](#) | [Industrial Distribution](#) | [Supply Chain Management Review](#) | [Modern Materials Handling](#) | [Manufacturing Business Technology](#) | [Kellysearch](#)

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

All Magazine and eNewsletter Subscriptions

BUSINESS & PRINTING:

[DM2-DecisionMaker](#) | [Zibb](#) | [Packaging Digest](#) | [Graphics Arts Monthly](#) | [Graphics Arts Blue Book](#) | [Converting](#) | [Expert Business Source](#) | [HotFrog USA](#) | [The Industry Measure](#)

GIFTS & FURNISHINGS:

[Furniture Today](#) | [Home Textiles Today](#) | [Home Accents Today](#) | [Casual Living](#) | [Kids Today](#) | [Gifts & Decorative Accessories](#) | [Playthings](#) | [Jlrs, Circ, Keystone](#)

HOSPITALITY:

[Hotels](#) | [R&I](#) | [Chain Leader](#) | [Foodservice Equipment & Supplies](#)

ELECTRONICS:

[EDN](#) | [Twice](#) | [Electronic News](#) | [Electronic Business](#) | [Test & Measurement World](#) | [Semiconductor International](#) | [Instat](#)

BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION:

[Associated Construction Publications](#) | [Buildcore](#) | [Building Design & Construction](#) | [Building Team Forecast](#) | [Construction Equipment](#) | [Consulting Specifying Engineer](#) | [Custom Builder](#) | [Daily Commercial News](#) | [Housing Giants](#) | [HousingZone](#) | [Interior Design](#) | [Journal of Commerce](#) | [Professional Builder](#) | [Professional Remodeler](#) | [Reed Connect](#) | [Reed Construction Bulletin](#) | [Reed Construction Data](#) | [Reed First Source](#) | [RS Means](#)