

THE THEATER MIRROR, New England's LIVE Theater Guide| [MARQUEE](#) | [USHER](#) | [SEATS](#) | [INTERMISSION](#) | [CURTAIN](#) |**"What Happened in Boston, Willie"****Reviews of Current Productions**

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"Our Hearts as Fiction"

by Brian Tuttle

Directed by Greg Maraio

Incidental Music by Steve Njavro

Set Designed by Eliza Lay, Brian Tuttle

Lighting by Colin A. R. Pearce

Costumes Designed by Greg Maraio

Set Construction by Morgan Sobel

Assistant Stage Manager Irina Rasputnis

Stage Manager Jennifer Collins Hard

Allen.....Morgan Sobel

Amy.....Julie Levene

Marchette.....Cynthia Wegel

Jillian.....Zoe Weingart

Elizabeth.....Eliza Lay

Adrian.....Joey Pelletier

Jeff.....Jason Warner

I've now seen two of Brian Tuttle's plays, both done by The 11:11 Theatre Company, for which he is Artistic Director and Playwright in Residence. I suspect the company is forging a unique style to bring life to his plays. In this one --- "Our Hearts as Fiction" playing for another Friday and Saturday this week at The Actors' Workshop --- there's a sort of surface-tension in the air as it slowly becomes obvious that this Perfect Little Family in a richly smug Gated Community (all that's missing is the gate!) is exhausted from the strain of keeping up appearances. Every once in a while someone's mask will slip, someone will blurt a truth, or the smoothness will shatter --- and everyone will busily heal over the scar with Shopping, from all those lovely new catalogues in the mail this morning. Affluence (or at least the illusion of it) is the next best thing to perfection in this bland high-maintenance version of hell.

The chorus of wives having ritual tea include Cynthia Wegel (Marchette), Zoe Weingart (Jillian) and Julie Levene (Amy), this "perfect family"'s rock --- a woman showing up to five houses a day in real-estate and hoping her peers will ignore the fact that her husband (Morgan Sobel) has moved out, and the just-friend (Jason Warner) who asked her along on an apparently chaste business-weekend in Paris hasn't so far taken his place.

But perhaps the strains of maintaining a facade of upper-middle affluent contentment falls heaviest on Amy's daughter Elizabeth (Eliza Lay), just out of high-school and bewildered by any possibility of future. Like her mother she seeks refuge in television tapes, wishing her life could achieve the reality of such fictions as Audrey Hepburn in "Roman Holiday" --- instead of the obviously fictitious reality of her own real life.

Elizabeth's salvation might come from the young love of her math-wiz/painter boyfriend Adrian (Joey Pelletier) --- if the pair weren't so perfectly adolescent in their awkwardnesses and purities. She has "an affliction" --- wanting to be held yet incapable of reaching out or being touched. He, of course, is all pure Love and wanting it all: asked what's the title of his newest, abstract painting "Elizabeth" is what he blurts, honestly. Collaged together his paintings form a window, through which he hopes the pair can see one another, Really see. But adolescence is an always all-or-nothing state, and he cannot fill the emptiness of a missing dad.

Dad does drop by. He begins the play, in fact, trying to make a tape, or a documentary of his wife's laugh, his daughter's smile --- of the loved lovely things about his life he has withdrawn from. He spends seventy-hours a week at a job he says he loves but wants to quit --- and even so his wife must sell real-estate to stay ahead of the mortgage on an artificial life for which the upkeep is really a killer.

Greg Maraio directed the play with a sharp eye to detail. When dad's appearance interrupts wife and friend as they are about to have a Real encounter, the black shirt/white tie of one and the white shirt/black tie of the other echoes the black walls/white teacups that subtly underscore the "reality" of "Roman Holiday" --- as yet not a ColorIzed Classic. As the lives of these perfectly happy denizens of a perfect mid-west town shred against the stubborn lies they all tell each other with blandly straight faces, Maraio's cast maintains the tensions he has them use to make the surreal sound true.

And Brian Tuttle's text breaks continually into sharp-edged metaphors and jewel-like poetic descriptions that make his bleakly black-and-white canvas come colorfully alive.

I like this company.

I like this playwright.

I like this play.

Love,

===Anon.

"Our Hearts as Fiction" (4 - 12 March)

[11:11 THEATRE COMPANY](#)

The Actors' Workshop (4th Floor) 327 Summer Street, BOSTON MA

Tickets 1(866)811-4111 Info: 1(617)423-7313

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