
[AXS ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT](#) / [PERFORMING ARTS](#)

Festival Connect - The best of all things are found in Halcyon Days

October 13, 2012

7:40 PM MST



Halcyon Days by Deirdre Kinahan
Tall Tales Theatre Company

Halcyon Days by Deirdre Kinahan

Rating: ★★★★★

Two of life's survivors find themselves washed up in the conservatory of a North Dublin nursing home. Discarded, for the most part, by those they have loved, each finds in the other something to help fill the declining days. The soft spoken Sean, a former actor of modest fame, is suffering from the early stages of dementia and is quietly resigned to letting life go. Not so the seemingly disagreeable Patricia, a former school principal and secret romantic whose liver is failing and who finds solace in Sean's companionship. Sharing cakes and secrets while dancing to classics from the movies, Sean and Patricia find moments of meaning in Deirdre Kinahan's tender and dark, delightful and charming *Halcyon Days* produced by Tall Tales Theatre Company.

The success of Tall Tales *Halcyon Days* is down to two memorable double acts. The first are writer

Deirdre Kinahan and director David Horan, who again join forces in this their third outing on a Tall Tale's production of an original work by Kinahan. Their obvious sense of accord and mutual understanding is evident throughout. The result is a strong script and memorable production that bravely tries find hope where hope has been abandoned.

The second double act saw Anita Reeves, as the emphatic Patricia, and Stephen Brennan as the resigned Sean crackle with chemistry and conviction as they brought to life two compelling and endearing characters. As Patricia began to open up to deeper layers of herself Reeves' performance moved from memorable to truly outstanding. As was the remarkable Stephen Brennan. Perfectly pitched throughout and showing exquisite comic timing, Brennan's heart breaking portrayal of the fragile and forsaken Sean was utterly compelling and in a league of its own.

With its acerbic heroine and forgetful hero, *Halcyon Days* did echo *One Foot in the Grave* at times. But *Halcyon Days* belongs to the theatrical tradition of great ageing duos, such as Lewis and Clark from *The Sunshine Boys* or Moyer and Carter in *I'm Not Rappaport*, highlighting the dignity of its odd couple facing into their final days. With so much sentimentality in play *Halcyon Days* unashamedly aims to tug at the heart strings. Like some great chocolate éclair or cream cornet, it's packed with rich, gooey loveliness. But indulge, and forget what you're supposed to eat. This is probably the best éclair or cream cornet you will enjoy for some time. Tall Tale's *Halcyon Days* is a marvellous production with two crowning performances. One which future productions will struggle hard to come in a distant second to. Go see it now while you still have the chance.

Halcyon Days runs at Smock Alley Theatre until October 14th. Doors open 7.30 p.m. Tickets are €14.00 - €25.00



Chris O'Rourke

Tulsa Theater Examiner

© 2006-2015 AXS Digital Group LLC d/b/a Examiner.com