

“Humans are a curious lot and without the guiding hand of a Supreme Being I rather doubt they would have lasted more than a few years.” Author unknown.

Some of the “curious lot” showed up in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s The Scarlet Letter, a tome I remember reading in tenth grade American Lit class.

The story fascinated me then and playwright Phyllis Nagy fairly faithfully translated the guts of that long-ago-memory into an intriguing two act stage play.

Since the story is so well known, the skills of the playwright, the director and the actors are “put to the test” so to speak. Thus what this audience member expected was something of a “show me” theatre trip.

This attitude, although maybe a bit unfair, allowed me to evaluate The Scarlet letter experience with a “new eye.”

Director/Set Designer **Peter Anthony** then skillfully wove this tale through a set designed to give life and meaning to an old delicious friend. **P.A.**’s set was marvelous because it supports the fabric of the story without competing with the tale itself. It is a very energizing set with eye catching pieces seeming to flow with the action of the play as they fit together making a pleasing whole.

This backdrop for The Scarlet letter then gave his actors a chance to give the audience a riveting, energy charged, performance worthy of a couple of hours of everyone’s precious time.

Peter Anthony’s blocking was fluid and certainly avoided any static scenes. Skillfully moving the players in and about the superb playing field is something Peter Anthony is noted for and it is highly pleasing that in The Scarlet letter his touch in this arena is once again top drawer.

If my memory serves me correctly, Hawthorne gave his character Hester Prynne a backbone that would make any rockribbed feminist proud to own. It is with pleasure I observed **Heather Lawrence-Wescott** not only brought that aspect to the forefront but with enough softness to make the audience empathize immediately with the character’s plight. I daresay some of us were even mentally shouting, “he who is without sin cast the first stone” because of this strong performance.

Please allow me to be prejudice (without malice) in favor of an admired character actor in our fair city, **Charlie Ferrie** as *Governor Bellington*. **Mr. Ferrie** has that acting quality to make any role he portrays come to life with superb energy. Not only that, but **Charlie Ferrie** makes you see the character and not **Charlie Ferrie**. A Scarlet Letter is another notch on **Charlie’s** acting gun handle.

Flavia Florezell flavored her portrayal of *Pearl* with the petulance of the seven year old she was supposed to be. Having followed **Flavia's** acting career for several years (back as far as when she only wanted to be billed as **Flavia**), I can attest to the fact she has matured into a very classy actress.

All-in-all it is a very talented ensemble. Energy bounced from wall to wall and from character to character. A rapidly paced presentation with nary a lull.

On a scale of five, I give Bas Bleu's **The Scarlet Letter** four stiff-necked citizens.