

MetroLA®

THE MEGAZINE

Bang! by Sean Parkinson

Gods and Guns - As a minimum, one gun specifically, Jamie's. Still, in this production, all armaments seem to come out blazing.

Anthony Mora's controversial novel **BANG! A Love Story** was first published in hard cover in '98, softcover released earlier this year. Although scenes from **BANG!** featuring **Linda Cardellini** in the lead played in LA and NY, the full play premiered on Aug. 5 at the **Sidewalk Studio** in Toluca Lake. Adapted for the stage by Mora, **BANG!** is produced by **Kurt Swanson**, directed by **Christian Kennedy**, and features **Jennifer Tetlow**, **Rico Simonini**, **Ann Convery** and **Roberto Sanchez**.

Mirroring the title, **BANG!** begins in the middle of what appears to be a rather time-sensitive state of affairs. It is here that we are promptly introduced to our 2 main character's, Jamie (Tetlow), a shrewd, blasphemous teenager who likes to pack heat; and John (Simonini), a 40-something year old journalist, who albeit he's tailored himself as a do-gooder, he finds himself wrapped up in more than he's anticipated - cults, abduction and a speedy get away.

The play's style is reminiscent to that of David Mamet, or Harold Pinter - the

piece is uncovered by the use of smaller scenes, separated by time-lapsed blackouts that set the pace just right. Mora's progression of characters is steady, and as the disparity in their age is obvious, we don't question their festering connection, their bond. More accurately, we embrace it.

Kennedy's direction is present. The development that we see from her actors sheds true light, from argumentative and restrained to close and ultimately comfy.

Tetlow's Jamie is compelling overall, and although at the start, her character, having been plucked straight from *The Flowers of God*, is at points a bit jarring, she in due course wins us over, her loud-like ways swiftly grow tendearing. Simonini's John is likewise strong. His trigger, removing Jamie from this "cult," is selfless, and though his deadpan takes center stage, we soon see him regress, and it is decidedly pleasant to examine his vulnerability flood out. Watching him squirm, flanked by his well-mannered John and contrariwise, potty-mouthed gun-toting Jamie, the gap definitely makes for entertaining theatre.

Turning in fine performances as well are **Ann Convery** and **Roberto Sanchez**, adding even more **BANG!**

RECOMMENDED.