



PhillyStage

Review: 'Any Wednesday'

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Joe Guzmán and Jessica Bedford in the Montgomery Theatre production of "Any Wednesday." Photo by Bill Papula.

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A hint of sleaziness hangs over Muriel Resnik's *Any Wednesday*, a sugar-daddy escapade and her only Broadway play and a highly successful one, running for two years in the mid-'60s. It's written to be appealingly scruffy-faced sitting-room comedy, although the living room is in the

About This Blog



Toby Zinman's night job since 2006 is theater critic for the *Inquirer* where she reviews New York and London as well as Philadelphia. Her day job: Prize-winning prof at UArts, author of five books about modern and contemporary drama, and doer of scholarly deeds (winner of five NEH grants, Fulbright lecturer at Tel Aviv University, visiting professor in China). She was recently named by *American Theatre* magazine "one of the twelve most influential critics in America."

Wendy Rosenfield has written freelance features and theater reviews for *The Inquirer* since 2006. She was theater critic for the *Philadelphia Weekly* from 1995 to 2001, after which she enjoyed a five-year baby-raising sabbatical. She serves on the board of the American Theatre Critics Association, was a participant in the Bennington Writer's Workshop, a 2008 NEA/USC Fellow in Theater and Musical Theater, and twice was guest critic for the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival's Region II National Critics Institute. She received her B.A. from Bennington College and her M.L.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. She also is a fiction writer, was proofreader to a swami, publications editor for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and spends all her free time working out and driving people places. Follow her on Twitter [@WendyRosenfield](#).



Jim Rutter has reviewed theater for *The Inquirer* since September, 2011. Since 2006, he covered dance, theater and opera for the *Broad Street Review*, and has also written for many suburban newspapers, including *The Main Line Times*. In 2009, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him a Fellowship in Arts Journalism. Thames & Hudson released his updated and revised version of *Ballet and Modern Dance* in June, 2012. From 1998 to 2005, he taught philosophy and logic at Drexel, and then Widener University. He also coaches Olympic Weightlifting for Liberty Barbell, and has competed at the national level in that sport since 2001.

Merilyn Jackson regularly writes on dance for *The Inquirer* and other publications. She specializes in the arts, literature, food, travel, and Eastern European culture and politics. In 2001, she was dance critic in residence at the Festival of Contemporary Dance in Bytom, Poland; in 2005, she received an NEA Critics' Fellowship to Duke University's Institute for Dance Criticism. She likes to say that dance was her first love, but that when she discovered writing she began to cheat on dance. Now that she writes about dance, she's made an honest woman of herself, although she also writes



The Inquirer apartment of a guy's mistress.

Any Wednesday, which is being given an excellent production that opened Saturday at Montgomery Theatre in Souderton, came after the film *The Apartment*, which later became the musical *Promises, Promises*; all three deal with the same subject: mistresses. I had the same questions as I sat in an audience of *Any Wednesday* this past weekend that occurred to me on Broadway a few years back, when *Promises, Promises* was revived.

Were extra-marital affairs really all the rage in the '60s? Does no one ever get hurt in these plots?

In *Any Wednesday*, no one seems to be hurt a bit, which makes the show way ahead of its time or flatly unrealistic, and I'm voting for the latter. It's a simple story: Man meets girl, man keeps girl in a certain lifestyle, girl meets man's wife, things should fall apart but maybe not. To make matters interesting, in *Any Wednesday*, girl also meet another guy who uses her to get to her man, a ruthless business tycoon who has trampled the much younger fellow in a business deal.

Any Wednesday, with its Manhattan smarties from the Upper East Side and its plot about relationships and the attractions and distractions of mid-century big-city life, reminds me of many a Neil Simon play but without the clever repartee. You couldn't ask for a smoother production than Tom Quinn's -- he's both the director of this *Any Wednesday* and the head of Montgomery -- and he gets fine work from the quartet of actors who offer entertaining portraits of their characters on Michael Kerns' impressive apartment set. In the end, though, the play is more curious than funny, even though it doesn't feel dated.

I can only think that it's the script, at best workmanlike, that fails to deliver, because you can't find fault with the interpretations: the busy Philadelphia actor Joe Guzmán has the sugar daddy part down pat and gives us a believably despicable elitist businessman; Jessica Bedford is his young mistress and matches her great looks to clear body-movement signals to aid in her nuanced performance; Ian Lithgow has a nice home-spun quality as the small-town boy intent on bringing the tycoon to his heels.

Gerri Weagraff has the hardest part of all, as the affronted wife, to whom the script says only: Why-can't-we-all-just-get along? She brings it off exceedingly well, even though the character seems not fully credible, like the play.

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Any Wednesday: Through June 30 at Montgomery Theatre,

poetry.



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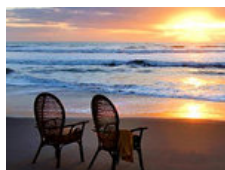
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