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Don Nigro's "Lost Generation" at The Sherry Theater a bawdy look at Genius

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Leif Steinert (F Scott Fitzgerald) Meg Wallace (Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald) and Nicholas Forbes (Ernest Hemingway)
Collaborative Artists Ensemble

Don Nigro's "Lost Generation" playing at The Sherry Theater in North Hollywood through June 7, 2015 by the Collaborative Artists Ensemble. is the story of three of America's literary icons from the turn of the last Century, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, and Earnest Hemingway. It begins in Paris some time after Hemingway and S. Fitzgerald meet in 1925. Directed by Steve Jarrad, the play navigates the tumultuous triangle of three artists, on the border of a love triangle laced with the conflict of the sexes, driven by the artistic obsession to write, and revealing the destructive madness that lied within each.

The play is set in one room that starts as a hotel room in Paris, but one quickly understands that as the play progresses it is just a containment for the ride the three actors take the audience on. Through brilliant writing and play of words and actions Don Nigro's story jumps from Paris to Africa, an

insane asylum, and to Hollywood and Idaho.

One may think this is history, why bother seeing it when the end is known, but the execution is hysterical. The witty bawdy play on words between Scott (Leif Steinert) Zelda (Meg Wallace) and Ernest (Nicholas Forbes) over drinking, male body parts, art, love, the literary greats of the day, and of course writing lead to one laugh after another. Yet laced in this was a tragedy of three people crippled and conflicted. This talented threesome may have achieved even greater heights but for their flaws. Or perhaps that the flaws and conflicts were a part of the brilliance that was uniquely theirs.

What was particularly interesting to the audience of today was the themes of writing, art and believe it or not feminism. S. Fitzgerald was deeply in love with Zelda, but she wanted to be a writer, and he held her back. Hemingway is seen in all his macho glory, the hunter, yet is criticized by Zelda and Scott as being cruel to animals and to people. At the same time Scott describes himself as a Jester and Hemingway as a knight.

Zelda rips into both and one realizes her position is one lost with a desire to be free of chains that may be due to her sex and position as wife. As she states in Act two, "Men just get nervous... if women create things."

Over it all looms the writing. The paranoia to be the best at it. The emphasis of the power of it. The conflicts over writing material that takes from the lives of those you are close to. Writing is declared to be greater than love, a creator of art and truth, and what kills all writers in the end. The play not only tells the story of three great artists, but manages also to give the audience a fascinating funny exploration of the other great writers of the day like James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, and Virginia Wolfe.

"Lost Generation" will be playing Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 7 pm through June 7th at the Sherry Theater, 11052 Magnolia Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 91601. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased by calling 323-86-6569 or at <https://www.plays411.com/lostgen>

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LA Performing Arts Examiner

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