

Murder will out

The Changeling

By **Thomas Middleton and William Rowley**

Directed by **Lauren E. Reinhard**

TheatreRats

Medicine Show Theatre

Equity showcase (closed)

Review by Seth Bisen-Hersh

The Changeling is an old classic that is rarely done. It melodramatically follows the dire consequences of murder and lust. TheatreRats presented a good, solid, if lengthy, production of this severely dated play.

The plot of *The Changeling* follows Beatrice (**Sarah Tillson**), who has been promised to Tomazo (**Zac Springer**) by her father, Vermandero (**Robert Haufrecht**). However, she has fallen in love with Alsemero (**Jess Cassidy White**), whose best friend, Jasperino (**Cedric Jones**) teases him for it. Enlisting the help of the slimy servant, Deflores (**Vince Phillip**) and her lustful maid, Diaphanta (**Jamie Askew**), Beatrice arranges for Tomazo to be disposed of, much to the chagrin of his brother, Alonzo (**Joshua Price**), who will not rest till he has vengeance.

This melodrama is juxtaposed to scenes in an asylum -- where insanity and lust are explored. Alibius (**Eric C. Bailey**), a doctor, and his man, Lollo (**Malachy Orozco**), are in charge of the mad people, including the bizarre, childlike Antonio (**Dalane Mason**) and the rash Franciscus (**Michael C. Freeland**). When Alibius's wife, Isabella (**Anna Chlumsky**), enters, a weird love triangle forms.

The script is exceedingly histrionic and theatrical. It feels Shakespearean at times but never reaches the same levels of sophistication. However, the show is interesting to watch from a historical viewpoint in theatre's evolution.

The ensemble was strong. The main standouts were Sarah Tillson and Vince Phillip. Tillson ran the gamut of emotions from lustful to loving to hateful to spiteful to repulsed to intrigued, with great skill and believability. Phillip fully embodied the lecherous Deflores -- he emoted passionately and creepily. Additionally, in the smaller role of the idiot changeling, Antonio, Dalane Mason was funny and charming.

Director Lauren E. Reinhard kept the intimate space from feeling cramped. The pacing of the dialog was good. However, the long, superfluous scene changes with the mad chorus taking a few minutes to move the giant cross around the stage added at least 30 minutes to an already lengthy show. Furthermore, while having them in the background throughout most of the show was admirably innovative, at times they were very distracting. Yet, the actual meat of the show was dynamite.

The black, white, and red color scheme used throughout the design was very effective. **Vince Lingner**'s set consisted of a huge black-and-white cross that was repositioned for each scene. **Chole Marie Barrett**'s costumes were mostly black, white, and red, supporting the bloodiness of the play. **Lance Darcy**'s lighting design kept the show lit, but darkly and creepily, again using a lot of red. Finally, **Julie Pittman**'s sound design was quite effective; the percussive, dissonant music created an ambience of disarray and unease apropos for the show.

Overall, *The Changeling* was overly long yet well-performed.

[Box Score](#):

Writing: 1

Directing: 1

Acting: 2

Set: 1

Costumes: 1

Lighting/Sound: 1

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