

From: Kimberlee Hart
Date: Friday, November 19, 2004 3:25 PM
Subject: Response To Your Critique of Theater Works

Dear Mark,

I am writing in response to your review of Theater Works' "Company". I have to say I am very disappointed by what you've written.

My issue is not with your critique of the show...that's your job, and I'll happily leave you to it. What has rubbed me the wrong way is your commentary on the company itself and on the artistic staff.

Before I begin, let me say that I am not on the staff of Theater Works, but as an actor/director in the northwest valley, I have become very fond of Theater Works and have a vested interest in its success.

As I have said before, the "new" Theater Works is in its infancy. It is a theater company starting over from scratch. It needs nurturing and care taking by a lot of dedicated and talented people.

I am happy to report that there are a lot of folks of that caliber who are currently working there. Right now it all boils down to time and money (as with all theater companies). The will is there and, at heart, Theater Works is still the same strong company you have fond memories of.

I believe that you've seen two shows there recently that you disliked. There have been many other shows there - even recently - that you have enjoyed. What is needed right now are people who believe in what the future of Theater Works holds. I would hope that someone with your prominence in the community would use your talent and influence in a positive way on behalf of this theater. After all, we call ourselves a theater "community", don't we? However, if you are not inclined to do so, your decision not to return is probably the right choice. And by that, I am deeply saddened.

Respectfully,

Kimberlee Hart

Kim,

I thank you for your intelligent and professional response to my review of *Company* at Theater Works.

I see where you are coming from and I understand your vision of yet another renewal of the company, by my count the third in the last four years. However, I feel that each renewal has brought along a new set of problems of their own creation. I feel that their response has been to pull away from the valley theatre community. Beyond the obvious lowering of their standards over the past two seasons, it is their perceived policy of disengagement with which I have the greatest difficulty. You ask me to support the company when they have clearly shown they do not want to be part of the community, and it is that to which I strenuously object. If and when they make moves to try to raise their standards and not drive off people with their policies, then I will gladly return with an open mind and a clean slate to see their accomplishments.

I respect you greatly as an artist, and have hopes that you will have a positive impact, but my sense is that the most important thing is fundraising for the future rather than improving for now. It seems they feel that their core base of subscribers will accept this until the new facility is in place. I am not one of their subscribers, and I can't bring myself to watch them coast. It's true that I have enjoyed productions there as recently as last season, but the two recent indicate a disturbing pattern of bottom-liners mortgaging today to save for tomorrow. If I were to see any more productions at the level of *Company*, my reviews will fall on deaf ears. I'm saving everyone time and effort by waiting until my criticism is considered worthwhile once more.

Cheers,

Mark S.P. Turvin