

REVIEW

Rep's *God of Carnage* Tickles the Funny Bone, Feb. 4–18

By: Chad Young, *nashvilleparent.com*

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Tennessee Repertory Theatre presents:

God of Carnage (Ages 16 and older)

TPAC's Johnson Theater

505 Deaderick St., Nashville

782-4040 • tennesseerep.org

Show times: Tue - Thu 6:30 p.m., Fri 7:30 p.m., Sat 2:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$42.50

In our extremely PC-driven world of today's era, when it's considered impolite — and scandalous — to speak one's mind about what truly resides within, there is a definite freeing moment when niceties fly out the window and one finally unbottles the proverbial cork and lets it all out.

That's what you can expect with Tennessee Repertory Theatre's outstanding production of Yasmina Reza's *God of Carnage*. Dubbed "a comedy of manners...without the manners," Reza's play is high on comedy while delivering a lot of sobering truth about the current state of human existence. It's not surprising that it won the Tony for "Best Play" in 2009 on Broadway.

Reza chose a very interesting, and succinct, centerpiece for her play: two couples forced to come together to deal with a fight that goes down between their two 11-year-old boys (which results in one of them having two missing teeth).

Diplomacy at first is at the forefront with both sets of parents, while they attempt to work toward a solution, and as it holds true in real life, it's only a matter of time before the gloves come off and the element of blame starts to swirl ... not only with the Raleighs versus the Novaks, but when infighting ensues between the married couples themselves, it's a voyeuristic dream come true to be the fly on the wall watching the shifting loyalties among the characters as they delve into chaos.

Rene Copeland's savvy direction in *God of Carnage* is an absolute triumph, bringing to life much drama and humor in a story that certainly hits close to home for anyone who is a parent.

The production enjoys the return of the amazing David Alford (Alan Raleigh) to the Rep's stage. He masterfully portrays his role with deft and believability as do the other three members: newcomer Shannon Hoppe (Annette Raleigh), Jeff Boyet (Michael Novak) and Shelean Newman (Veronica Novak). Together, all four impeccable actors infuse their characters with a lot of necessary idiosyncrasies to invoke intended laughter from the audience.

God of Carnage is the funniest play to hit the stage, and Tennessee Rep's production is one of the most outstanding performances in its history.