

**Review of *The Winterling* for *OutFront Magazine***

**by David Marlowe**

**“The Winterling”**

**Paragon Theatre: 10/17-11/14**

Cryptic and obtuse, Jez Butterworth’s “The Winterling” is as intriguing as it is frustrating to viewers attempting to unravel its Pinteresque mysteries. A mostly superb cast delivers riveting performances that are played out against a scenic design by one of the masters of the craft in Colorado. David LaFont’s scenic presentation is one of a farmhouse in Britain which smacks of a bombed out castle whose dilapidated walls are invaded by tree branches. LaBute’s characters include three thugs, a thoroughly tilted fool and a curious woman trying to flee to another country. She has something in a hatbox she found out on the moors. It’s only two or three days old. Is it the Winterling? Jarrod Holbrook, Warren Sherrill and Brandon Kruhm provide us with an unholy trinity of gangsters, which is magnificently multi-faceted. Mr. Holbrook’s performance as West is riveting. Warren Sherrill exhibits the professionalism Denver audiences have come to expect of him. Mr. Kruhm turns in a memorable performance. Leroy

Leonard’s characterization of the transient motor mouth, Draycott, is strikingly unique and flat-out annoying. On opening night Suzanne Favette had not yet found her character. Co-directors Taylor Gonda and Holly Ann Peterson elicit a moody, atmospheric tension from cast and crew that makes one shudder. Brian Freeland’s sound design is earth-shattering perfection! Indeed it is the very Bomb! In this reviewer’s not so humble opinion playwright Butterworth has provided us as audience with a cynical metaphor for life on earth where humankind continues to spiral down the never ending cycle of man’s inhumanity to man. These thugs take turns in alternating timeframes playing the torturer and the tortured. The castle outside the farmhouse has been there on the grounds of another ancient fortress for thousands of years. The robotic female voice activated by the pushing of a button at this historical site (we only hear about this machine) may well be the repetitive voice of history. And there is always a “Winterling” to give us apparently false hopes that there will be a “Springling.” Alas, it probably will turn out to be a “Thugling.” This one is a head scratcher, so be prepared to have your brain twisted mercilessly. Worth a peek.