

REVIEW

I and YOU

For 12/16 The River...and Island Sun if there's room

Florida Premiere At Lab Theater

by Di Saggau

Laboratory Theater of Florida's Artistic Director Annette Trossbach continues to bring cutting-edge theater to our area. Now playing is "I and You" about two high-school misfits who are thrown together for a last minute English project on Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." Mike Edouard is Anthony, and Eren Sisk is Caroline, and the two deliver astonishingly, sharp and funny performances during this 80-minute drama. The play by Lauren Gunderson is filled with topics including mortality, compatibility, first love and the importance of personal pronouns. Her mismatched characters are both tough and vulnerable.

Caroline has been sick for a long time. When Anthony comes into her bedroom to talk about the school project, she bombards him with "What is going on?", "Why are you here?", "Is this a joke?" These two impressively talented actors get into our hearts and heads and eventually the ever-deepening script takes on a thought-provoking new level that has the audience talking about it long after it's over.

I was blown away by Sisk's spot on portrayal of Caroline. This is definitely her show and there is a reason for that. She portrays many moods as expertly as any actor I've ever seen. It was truly amazing. The scene where she bounces on her bed doing an air piano pantomime of Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lot of Shaking Going On" is not only amusing, it shows the scope of her talent. Edouard is also good, more laid back, but there is a reason for that too. "I and You" is a play written with intellectual sophistication. We experience a growing relationship between these two youngsters and wonder where it will lead.

The ending is unforgettable and will leave you gasping. I rarely leave a play wanting to tell everyone to go see it. That's the way I felt when the curtain call ended. The play is done in three scenes with no intermission. These two actors have received standing ovations after each show and they deserve it. "I and You" is directed by Lauren Redeker. It plays through December 23 at Laboratory Theater of Florida, 1634 Woodford Avenue in downtown Fort Myers. For tickets, call 218-0481 or go to laboratorytheaterflorida.com.