



August 14, 2007

Facing East Plan-B Theatre Company @ Theatre Rhinoceros, 2926 16th St; 861-5079, www.planbtheatre.org/facingeast. \$20. Wed-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through Aug 26.

A Mormon father (Charles Lynn Frost) and mother (Jayne Luke) wrestle with guilt, anger, and displaced blame at the fresh graveside of their 24-year-old gay son in the aftermath of his suicide — a marriage-straining grief session made more polarizing by the unexpected arrival of their son's lover (Jay Perry). While overly contrived at points, Carol Lynn Pearson's generally strong, often absorbing one-act drama, presented by Plan-B Theatre Company at Theatre Rhinoceros, features well-observed and for the most part compelling characters. Moreover, given the grim circumstances, Pearson's play offers a surprising amount of humor and while affecting, is never dour. It's also laced with pointed psychological shading, as when the bereaved mother asks her God (as if it were not she who was the bearer of prejudice and bigotry), "Why did you have to make this sex thing so important?" On a nicely minimalist stage set against a moodily impressionistic vernal backdrop (beautifully realized by set designer Randy Rasmussen and lighting designer Cory Thorell), director Jerry Rapier and his solid cast (all from the original 2006 Utah world premiere) train themselves admirably on the most potent aspects of the drama, in which silences between characters often say as much as anything they willingly or reluctantly voice. (Robert Avila)