

The 99-Seat Beat: Danny Glover, 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' and a multimedia 'Macbeth'

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By Margaret
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Think of it as the theater's version of "reduce, recycle, reuse." This week on L.A.'s small and midsize stages we have familiar stories pared back to their essence, retold in a new context or combined with fresh elements in unexpected ways.

Our picks include Antaeus' "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," Danny Glover in East West Players' "Yohen," the Odyssey's "Macbeth x 5" and "Encuentro de las Americas," the Los Angeles Theatre Center's annual Latino theater festival.

1. 'Yohen' at David Henry Hwang Theatre

The essentials: Danny Glover originated the role of an African American Army veteran married to a Japanese woman in the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda's "Yohen" in 1999. East West Players (an Asian American company) and the Robey Theatre Company (an African American company co-founded by Glover) have teamed up again for this revival, and Glover reprises his role opposite June Angela, a Tony nominee for "Shogun: The Musical" and an Emmy winner for "The Electric Company."

Why this? It's a treat to experience a well-known screen actor's stage presence. Back in 1999, Times reviewer F. Kathleen Foley riffed on the play's title, "Yohen," a term used in Japanese pottery for the prized, offbeat beauty that results from kiln accidents. She described Glover's performance as "imperfect but compelling."

Details: David Henry Hwang Theatre at the Union Center of the Arts, 120 Judge John Aiso St., Los Angeles. Nov. 2-19. Performances at 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays. \$40-\$60. (213) 625-7000, www.eastwestplayers.org

2. 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses' at Antaeus

The essentials: Pierre Choderlos de Laclos scandalized France in 1782 with his epistolary novel about sexual intrigue and betrayal among aristocrats; when Christopher Hampton adapted the story for the stage in 1985, it proved just as titillating — and topical. These days the rich and powerful still behave badly, and we still love to watch them scheme, triumph and fall onstage, especially in frilly shirts.

Why this? If any L.A. company can be expected to deliver a lush, steamy celebration of intrigue and corruption, it's Antaeus. Director Robin Larsen is an L.A. veteran with a knack for revitalizing classics. (She helmed a lovely "Uncle Vanya" at Antaeus in 2015.) In Antaeus tradition, each role is played by two actors in alternating performances.

Details: Antaeus Theatre Company, Kiki & David Gindler Performing Arts Center, 110 E. Broadway, Glendale. 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays; ends Dec. 10. \$30-\$34. (818) 506-1983, www.Antaeus.org



Scott Ferrara and Nadège August in "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" at Antaeus. Geoffrey Wade Photography

3. 'Macbeth x 5' at the Odyssey

The essentials: Joel Asher has been performing in and directing Shakespeare plays since the 1960s, and apparently he's decided to cut to the chase with his latest "Macbeth," a streamlined, 80-minute version performed by

a cast of five. It's still a grim, bloody, supernatural tale of ambition, murder and guilt, but it moves faster, and the story is told through movement and projections as well as text.

Why this? Have you ever hesitated before buying a ticket to “Macbeth,” fearing its length, or the number of characters you’ll have to track? Asher’s adaptation, designed to appeal to Shakespeare aficionados and novices alike, will steep you in all the vivid horror of “the Scottish play” with time left over for a restorative dinner.

Details: Odyssey Theatre, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., L.A. 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays; ends Nov. 19. \$36. (310) 477-2055 Ext. 2, OdysseyTheatre.com



Stephen Tyler Howell in “Macbeth x 5” at the Odyssey Theatre. Enci

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4. Encuentro de las Américas in downtown L.A.

The essentials: This three-week festival presents 14 works of Latino theater. Familiar L.A. performers such as Culture Clash and the Latino Theatre Company play in repertory with artists from the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Peru and Colombia. Performances run simultaneously in all five theaters in the LATC, and tickets are available singly or in bundles.

Why this? If the Encuentro festival in 2014 is any indication, Spring Street is in for three lively, buzzy weekends. The shows have been chosen to represent a range of contemporary international theater-makers, and audiences can hop from one to the next. All works are presented in English and Spanish.

Details: Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St. Runs Nov. 2-19. Performances at 8 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturdays, 2 and 7 p.m. Sundays (check website for complete schedule). \$44 per show, with



Richard Montoya, left, Ric Salinas and Herbert Siguenza of Culture Clash. Encuentro

The 99-Seat Beat appears every Friday. Our team of reviewers, who have more than 50 years of combined experience tracking local theater, shortlist current offerings at 99-seat houses and other small venues. Some (but not all) recommendations are shows we've seen; others have caught our attention because of the track record of the company, playwright, director or cast. You can find more comprehensive theater listings posted every Sunday at latimes.com/arts.