

seeaplay.com

It's better live.

the league
OF SACRAMENTO THEATRES[PRODUCTIONS](#) [AUDITIONS](#) [SPOTLIGHT](#) [BEHIND THE SCENES](#) [TICKETS](#) [DINING](#) [ABOUT](#) [LEARN](#)
[events](#) [audience review archive](#) [performers resource area](#) [discount tickets](#) [employment](#) [volunteer](#)

audience reviews

The Bad Seed, Chautauqua Playhouse

Review: The performance was superb! The entire cast is a wonderfully talented group. Lauren Metzinger, the eleven year old lead, is absolutely phenomenal! She has been gifted with innate dramatic talent and is incredible to watch. The audience was obviously blown away by her performance. She is someone to watch in the future. Well Done! Watching this play is a heavy experience, but well worth the watch and one you will never forget. I highly recommend it.

Review: Fabulous. Mary Bond as the mother gradually becoming aware that she was living every parent's worst nightmare hits every complex emotion and pulls the audience along with her. Lauren Metzinger as Rhoda was both adorable and scary. One of her sinister little smiles was downright bone chilling. There were several minor parts of the sort you would think good actors wouldn't want to play but good actors did and nobody phoned in their lines. In particular Bob Nannini as Mr. Daigle was heartbreaking. He had very few lines but beautifully conveyed the agony of a man who was suffering his own grief while trying to take care of his out-of-control wife. Daryl Petrig, who probably caused the loss of a great many butts which were laughed off during the run of Picasso at Lapin Agile, was an entirely different character in Bad Seed. He was Christine's devoted father who was struggling to do the right thing for the daughter he adored. There was a moment that would have been easy to miss where he starts to become uncomfortable with the conversation. His discomfort is barely noticeable at first but gradually builds until he is in the throes of full blown denial. Sweet. Things happen gradually in this play. One of its pleasures is watching seeds (!) being planted and gradually growing until they become what they will be. It's a great story, somewhere between psychological drama and all-out horror, well told by this outstanding cast, crew and director.

Review: I've never seen the 1956 film version of "The Bad Seed". But the story has become a part of our cultural lexicon, a thread that contributes to the fabric of our fascination with deviance and sociopathic behavior and its co-habitation with the mundane. Hence the popularity of shows like Dexter and films, memoirs, and documentaries about serial killers and other criminals incapable of accessing the most human of emotions - like empathy and remorse. We find the very thought that we may live among such people, that they can exist in our world without our even knowing both thrilling and disconcerting. Chautauqua Playhouse's production of "The Bad Seed" successfully taps into that sense of unease right from the start. The production stays true to the story's original 1950's setting - the dialogue is overly formal and indicative of the then still solid gender and family roles, the set pieces are simple and familiar, and while not of

50's manufacture, definitely of 50's arrangement, and the costumes convincingly evoke the era of sharply pressed shirt-dresses and three piece suits. It take but a few minutes of the opening scene for the audience to understand that they are watching a period piece. That understanding is critical to successfully maintain the tension of the play - much like the critically acclaimed TV series "Mad Men", which is also set in a 50's tableau, the suspense and interest comes not from what is said, but from what is left unsaid, from what is so obviously, yet so completely repressed. The cast approach their roles at maintaining this repression in a variety of ways. Carolyn Gregory evokes a nervous and almost catholic sense of propriety as the schoolmistress Miss Fern. Daryl Petrig is a convincingly evasive, yet genuinely caring father and grandfather as Richard Bravo. And Warren Harrison does a fine job at making an empathetic character out of the absentee father and husband Kenneth Penmark without compromising the fixed gender and family roles that much of the plot depends on. The tension of the play is also fed by a trio of characters that, either intentionally or as victims of fate, find themselves cast as iconoclasts. Monica Breedlove, as played by Monique McKisson, takes pleasure in facing off against what she considers to be the repressed mores of the period, openly talking and inquiring about topics that obviously are intended to push the comfort level of the other characters. That she does this without crossing the line from endearing to irritating is a testament to Ms. McKisson's connection with the character. Julie Bock-Betschart also does an impressive job at clashing against the perceived appropriate behavior of the times without losing the sympathetic qualities of her character as the bereaved Mrs. Daigle. Her suffering, and her inability to express it openly or keep it completely repressed makes the moments that she is on stage absolutely engaging. And Michael Walker makes a convincing Southern Gentleman out of criminologist Reginald Tasker as he makes murder details and sociopathic analysis sound like parlor talk. It is only the intense and obvious repulsion to the topic as expressed by Christine Penmark, as played by Mary Bond, that emphasizes the subversive nature of such conversation. The plot of the play revolves around two characters, Christine, and her daughter Rhoda, played by an impressive Lauren Metzinger. The two are yin and yang, and as the play progresses and their relationship is developed, the truly intertwining yet completely opposite natures of their characters feed the suspense until it all but consumes the set. Ms. Metzinger plays Rhoda almost as an adult playing a child, which is fascinating to watch from an 11 year old actress. She controls her character well, so that each movement, each expression is obviously calculated - a fact that is in itself calculated. Her face is a mask, capable of expressing exactly what she thinks is necessary, as though she is processing events logically, and then searching for the appropriate emotional reaction to wear on the surface. The only time her mask slips is in the presence of Leroy, the maintenance man and small time bully who recognizes in Rhoda a certain quality that he believes he himself to possess. Chris Lamb does a fantastic job as Leroy, prying at Rhoda's secrets and managing to unsettle the unsettler. Any moments of honesty are quickly suppressed, however, as Rhoda slips her mask back on at will, convincingly calm and collected and unassailable. On the other hand Mary Bond portrays Christine with a level of immediacy and clarity that makes it impossible not to engage with her plight. Her face, in contrast to Rhoda's mask, is a window to her emotions. Even her attempts at emotional control - at conforming to the expected socially repressed expressions of feelings are portrayed obvious and of limited success as she works into place the puzzle pieces of her life and her daughter's behavior. Christine's empathy is tangible, her fellow feeling for other people palpable - particularly in her scenes with the grieving Mrs. Daigle. She reaches out to touch, to comfort and support Mrs. Daigle, only to pull back and cross her arms and try to erect some sort of emotional barrier. Christine's empathy and vulnerability, and Ms. Bond's delightfully expressive and emotionally accessible interpretation makes it impossible for the audience to

remain detached, as they want to reach out to comfort and support Christine in turn. That Ms. Bond manages to not only maintain but increase this emotional intensity as the play progresses is a compliment to her abilities as an actress. None of the cast members give half-hearted performances, and the supporting roles are played with conviction but also with a subtlety appropriate for the period nature of the play. I expect that as the play continues in its six week run, these performances will only grow more nuanced and complex, and by extension more entertaining. "The Bad Seed" is a suspenseful character driven exploration of deviance hidden among the mundane, and a great way to shake up an otherwise average weekend. Check it out.

Review: This play is a very fun thriller to sit back and enjoy. Many moments of humor offset the deeper questions asked, including can one be born a " bad seed ". The show starts off as we meet a seemingly happy family. However the dad goes for a long business trip, leaving his lovely wife and daughter behind. As we meet the characters in their lives, we also find out a classmate has been drowned. As the story progresses we find more and more clues telling us something is wrong. A very good plot will have you discussing the end as you walk out of the theatre ! While all the acting was good, great performances go to Lauren Metzinger, Julie Bock-Betschart, and Chris Lamb.

Review: Absolutely awesome! The actors who play Rhoda and Christine are true professional actors. They brought this play to life and making the audience laugh, cry, and bite our nails in anticipation. A definite must see while you still can!

Review: I found this play to be both DARK and DEPRESSING. Going out Saturday evening to relax and enjoy an evening of theater did not happen. I could have stayed home and watched any number of current news programs or TV B grade movies and been just as bored. I am amazed that this would be a play chosen by the Chautauqua players as it was simply TRASH!!!!

Review: I came home chilled to the bone. There are two weeks left in the run, and I may go again just to study the 'arcs' of tension developed by the very talented cast, led by excellent direction, and supported by superb technical creation and execution. You MUST see this if you were ever mesmerized by Hitchcock or Serling -- like their concoctions, there is plenty of humor and sentiment along with the gradually tightening noose of horror as events unfold. (Notice, as you leave, how your posture and breathing have changed!) As for the cast, they splendidly validate the old saying "There are no small parts; only small actors." Bob Nannini has few lines and almost nothing to do, but powerfully portrays the anguish of a bereaved father and embarrassed husband. As his wife, Julie Bock-Betschart has been pushed over the edge into an alcoholic haze by her sorrow and suspicions, but the actress never crosses that edge into a sloppy performance. Ddrunk is hard to do; completely intelligible lines and believable lurches made her a pleasure to watch. Chris Lamb has the slightly larger part of Leroy, and manages to be clumsy, slightly dim, sly, and eventually sinister as he plays an overmatched game with Rhoda. He recognizes that they are both mean, both smart; but doesn't realize he is outclassed. And Rhoda! Lauren Metzinger is astounding -- sugar sweet and blatantly manipulative by turns. She has enormous talent, and as she is only 11 years old, her director is due kudos also. She and her mother, depicted to a fare-thee-well by Mary Bond, play wonderfully to and off each other. All the other roles are well acted, staging is exceptional, and you should see this if you care about acting or fine theater in general. Way to go, Chautauqua!

Review: I loved it! Mary Bond was amazing. She really is just a pleasure to watch. Also, she made both me and my girlfriend cry! The little girl was very good, as well. Overall a wonderful production.

Review: A very difficult show to do and it was done very well. Lauren is excellent! A very talented young actress. It was a fine production and kudos to Chautauqua for doing it. Hopefully we will see more edgy plays from them in the future.

[show me more information about this show](#)

[get tickets for this show](#)

[I've seen this and would like to review it](#)

[close this window](#)

[productions](#) | [auditions](#) | [spotlight](#) | [behind the scenes](#) | [tickets](#) | [dining](#) | [about](#) | [learn](#)
[events](#) | [audience review archive](#) | [performers resource area](#) | [discount tickets](#) | [employment](#) | [volunteer](#)

[sign up to be notified about auditions, employment opportunities, new productions, and classes and workshops!](#)

© 2010 The League of Sacramento Theatres | webmaster@seeaplay.com

[web site designed and developed by Blossom Web](#)