



DAVID HAWE

Tara Samuel and John O'Callaghan in *The Affairs of Anatol*, about a man with an insatiable appetite for women.

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THE AFFAIRS OF ANATOL ★★★★★

Featuring John O'Callaghan, James S Murray. Written by Arthur Schnitzler. Adapted by Harley Granville Barker. Directed by Sue Miner. Presented by Glastonbury West. To Oct 9. Tue-Sat 8pm; Sat-Sun mats 2:30pm. \$16-\$31. Artword Theatre, 75 Portland. 416-536-6468.

The Affairs of Anatol, by the legendary horny Arthur Schnitzler, came out at a time when the phrase "girls gone wild" implied the exposure of soft necks and luscious ankles. Though our society's sexual views have changed, Schnitzler's scene cycle — about seven romances in the life of philanderer Anatol (John O'Callaghan) — remains as

progressive, funny and insightful as it was over a century ago.

Schnitzler not only gives his seven female characters (played by a terrific bunch including *Degrassi High*'s Stacie Mistysyn) depth and detail, he paints them as Anatol's equals. While the women suffer mistreatment, it is with the same dignity attributed to men. Furthermore, they are capable of being just as recklessly cruel as their male counterparts.

Marie Beath Badian is a riot as Mimi, a self-assured lover who casually dumps Anatol for a poor man. While Mimi shows no remorse about leaving Anatol, she is sad about leaving his wealth. As she frantically throws champagne and oysters down her throat in an act

of closure, Anatol is exposed as all lifestyle and no life. Still, we are never led to dismiss him as a bad guy. Instead, O'Callaghan effortlessly plays the lead as careless and funny, manipulative and sincere, proud and pathetic, all at once.

Modern texts often portray shallow womanizers mechanically following their dicks until the right lady teaches them to place emotion over sexual impulse. Schnitzler, on the other hand, creates a tortured bachelor from the start, one who saves locks of hair, writes poetry and fails to distinguish between the physical and the emotional. And just as Schnitzler refuses to portray Anatol as one-dimensional at the beginning, he is also smart enough not to redeem him at the end. **JAMES SIMONS**