

DENVER ART MATTERS REVIEW

LODO'S CURIOUS HOTEL

“**Driving Miss Daisy**,” performed at **The Barth Hotel** in downtown **Denver**, is a perfectly lovely, professional production staged in the ‘living room’ of the curious Barth Hotel. It was built in 1881 for Eastern rail travelers arriving at Denver’s Union Station. Looking east it gave them a first glance at this strange western city with a view up 17th Avenue. Depending on the traveler’s wealth, they looked east past the grand and glorious Oxford Hotel on to The Barth, which was a nice hotel that was ‘well lighted, perfectly ventilated and furnished in the most elegant and attractive manner.’

What is so charming about this production has to do with its living room charm. The actors are flawless and powerful. One forgets where you are while totally engaged in the stellar performances in this familiar endearing story. The audience is patient even when a resident mistakenly wanders in unexpectedly from the supposedly blocked elevator. During the hour and a half show with no intermission, the audience is treated to a comfy, sufficient set that is made up of one elegantly worn, upholstered chair and a phone stand, Boolie’s office and, the car represented by two stools, one in front of the other. Much of the dialogue centers on the conversation in the car between the irrepressible Daisy Werthan and her driver, Hoke, who drives his aging charge to the Piggly-Wiggly and Mobile, Alabama.

You know the story. It’s about aging, friendship, trust, loyalty and love. The three actors in this production are excellent. They exude well worn theatre legs, years of professional polish and the pure joy they have in delivering a performance as good as any you’ll ever see.

Miss Daisy actors:

Dwayne Carrington – Hoke Coleburn. His credits include award winning performances in the *Full Monty*, *It Ain’t Nothin’ But the Blues*, *Ragtime*, etc.

San Gregory – Boolie Werthan, Miss Daisy’s son. Gregory’s a familiar face in Denver where he’s appeared in 36 productions at the Denver Center Theatre Company, as well film & TV credits.

Billie McBride – Miss Daisy. McBride returns to The Barth after last year’s performance in *Chasing Manet*. Her Broadway credits include *Torch Song Trilogy* as well as numerous touring shows, Off Broadway productions, television and the Denver Center Theatre Company. McBride was nominated for an Emmy and numerous awards throughout her career.

Equally endearing for this night, the audience was introduced to Billy Beach, one of the residents at The Barth Hotel, who gave a brief hello to the guests. Billy thanked us for our support and told us how much he loves living in The Barth Hotel. He explained his gratitude to the staff who helped him button his shirt and put on his shoes after his recent operation.

The Barth Hotel is the home to 62 low-income, elderly and disabled residents who receive quality care from a dedicated and concerned staff.

The Barth Hotel is a fine example of people helping people. *Driving Miss Daisy* is a benefit for **Senior Housing Options** in **Denver’s LoDo**.



Top photo: entrance to **The Barth Hotel**.

Union Station, standing in front of The Barth Hotel entrance looking East at the station which brought travelers to the Queen City of the Plains.