

BACKSTAGE WEST MAGAZINE REVIEW

"ARLINGTON"

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By Travis Michael Holder

There are countless clarion calls to end war and warring these days, a message repeated endlessly in the hope that someone at the top of the power grid will listen to what the people have to say. Some of these statements are obvious and harshly stated, but **Garry Michael White's** subtle antiwar play has a message both gentle and heart-rending.

The play consists of five one-acts that explore the lives of those left behind in war. As directed in this production by **Nurit Siegel**, **Eric Mofford**, and **Armando Molina**, a generally dynamic ensemble takes us on a haunted journey we hopefully won't soon forget.

From *Where Jack Is*--which begins in 1917 as a mentally handicapped baker (**Colter Allison**) is wooed off to fight in World War I--to *Officer Frank Turkey, M.D.*, which takes place in a shrink's office overlooking Arlington National Cemetery in 2008. White explores America's unquenchable hunger for war through the past century and into the near future at the cost of our country's moribund sense of virtue.

Although the cast is uniformly committed to telling these occasionally related stories, there are standouts. **Allison** is touchingly simple as Jack in the first piece and equally watchable in *Tree* and *Deerhawk* as a conflicted young draft dodger avoiding Vietnam.

Lance Lee Davis is also a conspicuous presence.

Tony Gatto delivers a knockout final monologue as a former cop traumatized by 9/11, and **Tricia Allen** is impressive as a feisty Korean War-era wife who opposes her military father-in-law's decision to bury his pacifistic but obedient son in Arlington against her wishes.

A wounded World War II soldier (**Joseph Gilbert**) meets secretly with Judy Garland (**Sarah Zoe Canner**) in a Culver City diner in *LSMFT*, White's most confusing puzzle piece; except for one moment when the pill-popped star realizes that many of the boys she sang for at a USO event have since been killed, this one doesn't quite fit in with White's other tales of the sad collective loss of America's innocence.