

Chester Theatre Company, Chester, MA

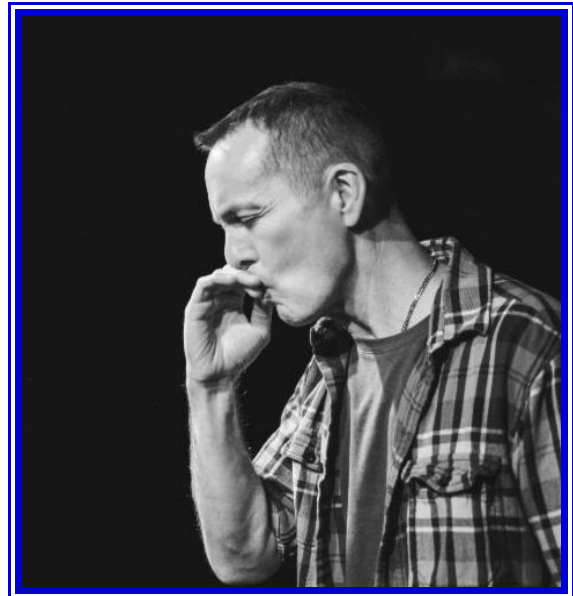
Unreconciled by Jay Sefton and Mark Basquill. Directed by James Barry.

Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman.

“It was the people.”

Jay Sefton plays a dozen characters in his play “Unreconciled” including himself. This character is not Sefton as he is, but Sefton as he once was. He was a boy of thirteen when his priest abused him and he plays both of them as well as his father, his mother, a neighbor lady and others whose existence influenced him at that young age. He does this effortlessly. Many of them sound alike, but only in part as the Philadelphia accents flood in and out of the play. The script holds dynamics that make you gulp, make you laugh, make you sit up and take notice. You never cry. Nothing in this work brings you to tears. It is a traumatic look at a time in Sefton’s life that brought him a career choice and left him anxious for that life to begin. More a dramatic confession than a play, this one-man show stuffs its realities down your throat and you cannot object to that for his story-telling, his reliving the tale, is simply artistry, extraordinary artistry.

Alone on his character-filled stage the very theatrical presentation, filled with sudden technical intrusions, marches relentlessly through time. His father, a warm and gregarious man, addresses us directly while playing opposite others on stage. Sefton appreciates him and gives us the best of him. He is wonderfully brought to life under director James Barry’s excellent guidance. The two men have used the stage well with Nicholas Hussong’s fascinating set and projections providing structure for Sefton’s work.



Jay Sefton; Photo: Dennis Crommett

The places in this play are real; my companion knew them all. Presumably the people are all real also. Fascinating lighting designed by James McNamara transported the play from one sort of reality to another. The language, the postures, the accents, and voices of the many people in this play keep us aware of the hundred “whats?” in the story. And if you can believe it, Sefton actually chases himself around the stage until he catches him. I rarely recommend a one-person play but this is the one to see this season. Hurry and see it!

+ 07/06/2024 +

Unreconciled plays at the Town Hall Theater, 15 Middlesex Road, Chester, MA through July 14. For information and tickets call 413-354-7770 or go to www.chestertheatre.org