

Barrington Stage Company. Pittsfield, MA

N/A by Mario Correa. Directed by Katie Birenboim.

Reviewed by J. Peter Bergman.

“Horror movies end.”

Two women meet in the older woman’s office and the meeting does not go well. That scenario is repeated over and over for at least three years and though they sometimes seem to agree on the basic things their relationship continues along the same lines set up at the outset. “N” is experienced, set in her ways and comes from a long tradition of materialism while “A” is an upstart, extremely young and racially separate from the traditions of this place called the House of Representatives. While playwright Mario Correa never uses their names, their initials say it all. We are watching Nancy Pelosi and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez. This awkward combination is actually fascinating.



Kelly Lester, Diane Guerrero; Photo: Daniel Rader

Barrington Stage Company is taking an odd political stance this season with their first three productions focusing on the American sensibility. First came “Eisenhower: This Piece of Ground,” and now “N/A” about the two sides of Democratic politics and next will be “Camelot” transformed into a show about the birth of it all. Their theatrical sense is all about who we are instead of who the characters are meant to be.

This one is a strong, dramatic comedy about points of view. It works very well, thanks in part to the vivid direction by Katie Birenboim who keeps things at a vivid and vibrant level which has “N” at the top of her temper most of the time and although she tries to control that temper she is more often yelling at “A” than reasoning with her. I don’t know if Pelosi is prone to shouting at her rivals, but I suspect not. That privilege has been given to this character, played so well by Kelly Lester, but it works for the show, keeping the comedy super-dramatic. Lester does remind us of Pelosi, though she is not a look-alike. Her poise and her single costume, beautifully designed by Mika Eubanks, give us the look we think we know - soft and feminine yet indubitably professional. The actress in the pink suit speaks of matters with historical perspective and absolute knowledge and she makes her points reasonably, with well thought-out precision. It is the moments of anger though that complete this character and make her memorable, even if there are other ways to express anger than yelling.



Kelly Lester; Photo: Daniel Rader

Diane Guerrero as “A”OC seems to live in utterly controlled fury for most of her time on stage. “A” has arrived with an agenda that cannot be quelled by “N” and she means to become essential to the workings of Congress as her superior has always been. Like Lester her basic look does not vary much



Diane Guerrero; Photo: Daniel Rader

and instead of a gavel, she wields a cell-phone like a weapon. From the outset, in which “A” refuses to leave after “N” has concluded their meeting, “A” as the newcomer controls every situation. We wait, almost in frustration for “N” to dominate but she practically never does. In this fashion we witness the lessening of “N”’s power as a congressional leader. No longer Speaker of the House, she moves back into that position temporarily, but gracefully moves on into near anonymity.

Late in the play we witness their reactions to the horrors of January 6, two scenes I found extremely moving. I cried, as much from the memory of that day as from the wonderful acting of how these two women handled that situation. These scenes are remarkably drawn and performed.

Brian Prather delivers his usual fine set and Wheeler Moon’s lighting design is equally so. Brandon Bulls’ sound design is excellent. The production Birenboim has given us is definitely worth seeing, mostly for the two actresses whose delivery make it all so very real.

+ 06/08/2025 +

N/A plays on the St. Germain Stage, 36 Linden Street , Pittsfield MA through June 22. For information and tickets go to barringtonstageco.org or call 413-236-8888.



Diane Guerrero, Kelly Lester; Photo: Daniel Rader