

Title: *Sunset Playhouse's Wait Until Dark* is a vision of simmering noir mystery that makes nearly all the right choices

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Wait Until Dark follows Susan Hendrix, a blind woman who is unwittingly in possession of a doll three nefarious men are trying to very much to get a hold of. That's it; the entire plot of the play revolves around these three nefarious men—Roat, the oily, maniacal brains of the operation; Carlino, the dirty ex-cop muscle; Mike, the likeable honey pot— and their increasingly nefarious ways of bullying an innocent blind woman into giving it up. It is a deceptively simple plot, but it's the clever choices it makes that make it work.

Director Dustin J. Martin flexes his imagination, casting Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of Frederick Knott's play back a few decades, to 1944 in Greenwich Village, where neon light shines through the Venetian blinds of The Hendrix's garden apartment. It's a small choice to make but it pays dividends here, conjuring up the moodiness and mystery of classic noir.

Indeed, light, or a lack thereof, are integral to the plot of this story and how it's told. The audience is once and again thrown into utter darkness as the tension of a scene hits its pitch and continues to play on before them in the blackness. It's a bold trick that works to surprisingly great effect, considering live theatre is a primarily visual medium; talk about clever choices.

The production is capably acted by a tight cast. Josh Scheibe exudes an air of mercurial evil as Roat, while Chris Celestin instantly charms us as the endearingly duplicitous Mike. Maura Atwood's Susan also has moments of charm, but her choice to adopt the sing-songy intonation of a Jewish American New York accent is something of a befuddling and conspicuous distraction here. That's the thing about choices: sometimes we get it wrong. But sometimes we get it right. Go watch *Sunset Playhouse's Wait Until Dark* and see for yourself.