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Insider Views

from Kirk Douglas Theatre

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A message from CTG's resident dramaturg / literary manager

Pier Carlo Talenti, Center Theatre Group's Resident Dramaturg and Literary Manager, is intimately involved in the development of many productions presented on our stages. He is an integral part of the research process, providing historical and social context for each work and keeping an independent and critical eye on our creative activities. In this issue of INSIDER VIEWS, he discusses the Kirk Douglas Theatre's world premiere of Lisa Kron's *The Wake*.

Dear Theatre Lover:

Over two years ago, London's newspaper *The Guardian* ran a story asking why there were no politically conservative viewpoints in the British theatre. The topic clearly jangled nerves across the pond because not long after, *The New York Times* ran a similar story questioning the dearth of conservative perspectives in the American theatre. Looking back at that article (I've included links to both articles below), I still agree with my colleagues who are quoted. The fact is that American playwrights tend to write from a leftist viewpoint, and the same seems to be true in the United Kingdom.

From my experience over the years, I have also found our audiences to be more liberal than not. We sometimes receive letters from more conservative theatergoers who ask (sometimes nicely, sometimes not) why we and the playwrights we produce assume we are preaching to the choir. These audience members clearly feel left out of the conversations our plays hope to instigate.

Which is why I'm so eager to hear the conversations that our next play at the Douglas, Lisa Kron's *THE WAKE*, may engender. When you see it, you will note right away that its central characters are undeniably liberal. The playwright herself is liberal, but as you will discover, she is an incisive questioner.

I'm loath to characterize *THE WAKE* as being a political play because it is primarily a love story, two love stories in fact. I love its characters and feel so much for them, but what I find most compelling about the play is that it looks the choir, as it were, straight in the face and, rather than preach, it asks, "Is this who you are?" And though it would be a stretch to say the play is pitched to our right-of-center audience members, I'm very curious to see how they (perhaps you) will also react.

I really look forward to the two Wednesday StageTalks I'll be moderating and especially to our AfterWords, which will take place on Thursday, April 22. Please consider attending one of these discussions. I think there will be a lot to talk about.

See you at the Douglas.

[Read The Guardian story mentioned above.](#)

[Read the New York Times story.](#)

[Visit our site for more information about StageTalks and AfterWords.](#)

Thank you.

Pier Carlo Talenti
Resident Dramaturg / Literary Manager

Insider Views is the Kirk Douglas Theatre's newsletter. There is no regular schedule or standard format for it. You'll receive it from time to time, when we have interesting, relevant or breaking news about our productions at the Douglas.

Eat, Drink and Be Social: The Lounge opens one hour before show time, serving drinks and eats from Culver City's culinary stars. Step into the Lounge after the show to hear our resident DJ's spin the coolest grooves and join the cast and crew for cocktails and conversation. When the applause dies down, your night continues at Culver City's hottest late-night spot. Open late nights Thu-Sat.



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