

New York City Reviews

for



"A one-man show is hard to pull off. Luckily, in *Southern Man*, the writers, director, and performer manage to do just that, delivering an engaging and enjoyable show that has a wonderful mixture of comedy, poignancy, and drama.

***Southern Man* is based on the real-life experiences of a World War II POW, who enlists in 1939 after realizing that he was never going to make it as a farmer in North Carolina. Sent to the African desert, he is captured by Rommel's troops and endures a harrowing two years as a POW in various camps in Germany.** The writers (Stuart Katz, Jeff Pierce, and Colleen Pierce) obviously have a huge affection for the real-life character and the script has great heart.

Jeff Pierce, as Jackson Taylor, displays typical Southern charm, warmth, and humor, drawing you into the character's story from the very start. Pierce also plays the 17-odd other characters in the piece, often having conversations with himself as all the different POWs in the camp and displaying an impressive range of dialects and accents. As a Brit, I was impressed that his English (and Scottish) accents are spot-on. He also gives each character a unique physicality, very hard to do when jumping between characters in the space of a line or two, but something he has great success at. He has some tough transitions at times, playing a character reduced to tears through loss or devastation and then switching back to the main character and continuing the story in Jackson Taylor's unhurried, friendly manner. It is a great testament to his skill as an actor and director Colleen Pierce's strong choices for each of the characters that it was so easy for the audience to follow him ... He creates many laugh-out-loud moments with his comical characters, while also bringing us close to tears in more poignant moments, and never letting the audience's attention wander."

- Rachel Grundy

nytheatre.com

"Tom Brokaw immortalized the Americans who fought in World War II as the "Greatest Generation," but the new play *Southern Man* makes an equally compelling case for them to be known as "Generation Lost." This solo performance introduces Jackson Taylor, a North Carolina farm boy who enlisted in 1939 for no better reason than his boredom with tilling the soil. Jeff Pierce injects the role with an intriguing sense of wonderment under the brisk direction of Colleen Pierce.

...Whatever the play's view of the World War II soldier may be, it certainly suggests further contemplation of the soldiers who have volunteered for every war since. We might like to believe that the 18-year-olds who signed up for Vietnam and Iraq did so out of clear personal convictions, but the story of Jackson Taylor forces us to confront an agonizing alternative: that they simply had nothing better to do. *Southern Man* is a heartbreaking throwback to the days when returning soldiers were greeted by ticker-tape parades and everything turned out just fine. Perhaps the reason this story needs to be told is that Jackson Taylor's beguiling blend of stoicism and humor is dying out along with the last of the Greatest Generation."

- Bryan Clark

showbusinessweekly.com