

BILL GLOVER - AP Drama Critic

The production at the Public was seen at a preview because another unusual dramatic venture also opened Thursday at another busy off-Broadway center, the Manhattan Theater Club.

Entitled "Red Fox-Second Hangin," this is a folksy compendium of bygone and often bloody doings up in the Cumberland Mountains "where Virginia and Kentucky back up on one another," performed by a hearty trio of men from Whitesburg, Ky.

The little troupe, Roadside Theater, was started in 1974 by the Office of Economic Opportunity and the American Film Institute as a pilot project for media training of minorities, in this case the natives of Appalachia.

Against a shifting background of old photographs, the Roadsiders take turns at homespun storytelling with occasional touches of colloquial accent. The wistful yearning for a lost past is touching, often humorous, and theatrically meritorious.

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