Terry won't talk, says the poster for Terry Won't Talk, a play by Mark Lieb about a lawyer who suddenly decides to stop talking. Terry by Terry, directed by John Madden, with the American Repertory Theatre appearing in repertory at the Loeb through July 12. "Intense" is the best word to describe the dual play's youthful idol Terry by Terry. They are not without their funny moments — in fact, the playwriting, Mark Lieb, has seen fit to couch psychological meaning within the framework of comedy.

The first play, Terry Won't Talk, tells the story of Terry Blade, a young adolescent who suddenly decides to stop talking. Terry, played by Mark Linn-Baker, does nothing more than stand and watch the breakdown of those around him: his friends, his family, his teacher. To all intents and purposes, he is not even there. But his absence is a catalyst that drives his acquaintances to reveal their terrified inner selves.

Terry's father (Richard Grusin) is a typical businessman, a man who works hard in the office and expects to hear the same tired old script every day — or so it seems. Terry's mother/untrue wife driven to choose silence is seen alternately as the impetus to in the form of his wife's affair with a younger, more virile man. Terry's father's silence breaks the chain of idle words and forces him to face reality in the form of his wife's affair with a younger, more virile man.

Mrs. Blade (Elisabeth Normont) gives the best performance, that of a mother/aurate wife driven to choose between her husband and lover. Terry's silence is seen alternately as the impetus to disclose her spouse's affair with a younger man, or to drop her lover and mend her ways. Similar crises are posed by the boy's siblings. The teacher, a man who works in the school as a translator, still planning to write his great novel some day; the snobbish, intellectual Adrienne (Marianne Okin), who prefers juicy gossip to the truth; and Kathy (Lisa Sloan), Terry's step-sister, whose schoolmates are rather nonchalant. Kathy has nowhere near as smart or as educated as the others. Adrienne worries about her. Wholer pities her, and Terry treats her like dirt. Why? To try to get something new and different out of his Sousa picture. - Let me be frank with you." By the end of the play the audience is clearly expecting a denouement in the lives of all those whose paths cross the mute boy's. The actual ending left the audience as mute as Terry and took time to understand. There are no answers. The audience must draw its own conclusions as to the resolutions of the various conflicts.

Terry Won't Talk sets the framework for the second play, Terry Rex. The Terry of this play, well-acted by Robert Bean, turns out to be the man who is supposed to have written the first play. He is a disgruntled playwright forever searching for something "different," for new ways to express himself and his art. His maneia for originality has driven him to demand novelty and cleverness from real people as well as from his characters. He knows people perfectly — their strengths and weaknesses, their character traits and foibles. Indeed, if all the world's a stage, all people are playing the same tired old script again and again every day — or so it seems to Terry.

Terry's telo group of friends includes erudite Wholer (Kenneth Ryan), who prostrates his large knowledge of languages as a translation, still planning to write his great novel some day; the mob, intelligent Adrienne (Marianne Owen), who prefers juicy gossip to the truth; and Kathy (Lisa Sloan). Terry's friends, whose schoolmates are rather nonchalant. Kathy has nowhere near as smart or as educated as the others. Adrienne worries about her. Wholer pities her, and Terry treats her like dirt. Why? To try to get something new and different out of his Sousa picture. - Let me be frank with you." By the end of the play the audience is clearly expecting a denouement in the lives of all those whose paths cross the mute boy's. The actual ending left the audience as mute as Terry and took time to understand. There are no answers. The audience must draw its own conclusions as to the resolutions of the various conflicts.

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