

STAGE REVIEW

Wives Tale

At Dragon Theatre, three women dish in the kitchen

MICHELE LOWE'S humor lands somewhere between malicious and malevolent in *The Smell of the Kill*, the latest Dragon Productions play. Three women sequestered in Nicky's (Meredith Hagedorn) kitchen as their husbands convert the adjoining rooms into a mini-golf course do what seasoned wives do best: gossip, process, accommodate their men's shouted requests and stab each other in the back (figuratively, for the most part). And talk about their husbands, of course. Nicky's husband, who has squandered them into debt, is under indictment; Debra's (Laura Jane Bailey) husband is a philanderer; Molly's (Shannon Stowe) husband has regressed to puppy love, avoiding physical intimacy in spite of Molly wanting to have a baby.

Under director Ana-Catrina Buchser, Dragon Productions has brought big theater values (and sellout crowds) to the play in a small theater space, where set designer Ron Gasparinetti has crammed everything plus the kitchen sink and still left room for scuffles, slapstick and flying golf balls. Unseen beyond a swinging door, the three husbands coo love talk, bark commands, thump around, hurl golf balls and occasionally threaten the kitchen sanctuary by advancing on the door. It's an extravagant outlay of male talent (husbands are played on alternate evenings by Dale Albright, John T. Aney and Steve Cortopassi or Thomas Gorrebeek, Tom Gough and Josh Sigal), in light of how little we see of the husbands. But the men's live presence lets the audience share the women's sense of impending interruption.

The three women deliver quick comedic timing in an easy, natural-feeling package as clipped retorts pile on each other, rapid fire: "It's not my turn" (Debra); "Yes it is" (Nicky); and "Ha" (Molly) all come out in a split second. In lesser hands, we would have time to reflect on whether the repartee feels contrived or the routines gratuitous (like why all the women end up taking off their shirts). But Stowe, Hagedorn and Bailey make the women plausible, right through the implausible ending. As Debra, the most "righteous" and apparently happily married, Bailey is the queen of subversive facial expressions. "Yes, poor Nicky, blah, blah, blah," she says as her tongue extends into barf position.

Bailey's Debra snipes with an air of goodwill: "Maybe you're not supposed to have a baby," she tells Molly as if consoling her. Stowe's bouncy red hair and pretty, freckled face, make it easy to see Molly as Danny's cuddle-toy obsession (he sets her watch to go off every two hours so she'll think of him). Stowe puts a warm fuzzy face on Molly's cold-blooded conscience. As the breadwinning book editor Nicky, Hagedorn coats both strength and frustration in an unflappable cynicism. Lowe's humor exposes the worst of women's behaviors—such as when one woman leaves the room, the other two churn her into gossip without changing gears. These three create an emotional environment as changeable as the weather, moving in a trice from catty humor to sympathetic listening. Though Lowe gives the guys in these women's lives a pretty raw deal, a mixed audience at a recent show indicates that the humor is fairly equal opportunity.

Marianne Messina

THE SMELL OF THE KILL, a Dragon Productions presentation, plays Thursday-Saturday at 8pm and Sunday at 2pm through Nov. 18 at Dragon Theatre, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto. Tickets are \$15-\$20. (800.838.3006)



TRIUMVERATE Three women take on their husbands and each other in Dragon's *The Smell of the Kill*.

Thru Nov 19. Tue-Wed, noon-7pm, Thu-Sat, noon-9pm, Sun, noon-7pm. 14531 Big Basin Way #2, Saratoga, 408.867.0171.

Aicon Gallery

John Tun Sein. A solo exhibit of Sein's abstract paintings. Thru Nov 30. 535 Bryant St, Palo Alto, 650.321.4900.

Albin Frame Shop

Remembering the Great Pumpkin Patch. Fine art and print exhibition of works by local artist Robert Schick. Thru Nov 22. 650.941.0555.

610 Rancho Shopping Center, Foothill Expwy and Magdalena Rd, Los Altos.

Allied Arts Guild

Anthony Montanino. Oil portraits of the courtyards and fountains featured at the Guild. Ongoing. Yvonne Miller. Art and jewelry. Ongoing. 75 Arbor Rd, Menlo Park, 650.948.3641.

Anno Domini

Animalia. A solo exhibit by Kevin Earl Taylor. Thru Nov 28. 366 S. First St, San Jose, 408.271.5151.

Art Ark

2 From the Ark. Paintings by Eileen Graham and Lucy Liew. By appointment only. Thru Dec 14. 408.888.4458 or 408.835.2875. Common House Gallery, 1035 S. Sixth St, San Jose.

Betty Wright Swim Center

A Clear View. A mural by Judy Gittelsohn and 207 children with developmental disabilities. Ongoing. C.A.R., 3864 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto.

BRUNI Gallery

Figurative Sculpture by Kristina Sablan. Ongoing. *Musical Icons*. The jazz masters series by Bruni Sablan. Ongoing. California landscapes, wildlife and Western paintings by Mark Vincent Gray. Ongoing. *Africa: Look at Us; A Look Inside the Congo*. Works by Bruni. Ongoing. Photography by Jerry Callaway. Ongoing. Daily 1:30-6pm 394 E. Campbell Ave, Campbell, 408.370.4700.



Discover Arts in the Valley

Palo Alto Philharmonic Chamber Concert I

Dvorak String Quintet, Mozart String Quintet, Karl Jenkins: Aldiemus Variations, Astro Piazzolla: Tristeza De Un Doble 'A' for Accordion and Piano, Vaughan Williams: Quintet for mixed instruments.

Saturday, Nov. 17, 8:00 pm

Palo Alto Arts Center Auditorium

1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto

\$17 General, \$15 Senior, \$6 Student

Tickets at the door or on www.paphil.org

South Bay Guitar Society "A Homage to the Venezuelan Guitar"

Featuring **Ricardo Iznola**, guitar with Linda Wang, violin

Sunday, Nov. 18, 7:00 pm

San Jose Stage Company

490 South First St., downtown San Jose

\$25/\$20 Assigned seating, \$15 General

Call (408) 292-0704 or order on-line at

www.sbgsg.org

For more information, call 408 251-8440 or visit www.svarts.org. The Silicon Valley Arts Coalition represents the main arts disciplines with a mission to increase visibility and expand audiences for small-budget organizations.

San Jose Symphonic Choir

Ralph Vaughan Williams'

"Hodie" a Christmas cantata

With the Mission Chamber Orchestra and Menlo School Chorus

Saturday, Nov. 24, 8:00 pm

St. Joseph Cathedral Basilica

90 South Market St., San José

\$20 General, \$16 Student/Senior, \$8 Child

www.sanjosesymphonicchoir.org

(408) 995-3318

Music at the Mission and Music@Market "Poèmes"

Three dazzling artists in a passionate program of 20th Century works: Lucy Shelton, soprano, Cynthia Mei, violin, and Stephen Gosling, piano.

Friday, Nov. 30, 8:00 pm

St. Joseph Cathedral Basilica

For more information: www.musicsouthbay.org

Saturday, Dec. 1, 8:00 pm

Old Mission San José

43300 Mission Blvd., Fremont

For more information: www.musicatmsj.org

\$25 General, \$20 Student/Senior

Go to: www.ticketweb.com

Silicon Valley Arts Coalition



West Valley Light Opera Association
Announces Auditions for

DAMN YANKEES

Based on the novel, "The Year The Yankees Lost The Pennant" by Douglass Wallop

Words & Music by Richard Adler & Jerry Ross
Book by George Abbott & Douglass Wallop

at the Saratoga Civic Theater • 13777 Fruitvale Ave, Saratoga
Sunday, November 18: 6:30 – 9:30 PM and
Monday, November 19: 7:00 – 10:00 PM
Call backs: December 2 & 3: 2007, 7:00 – 10:00 PM, venue TBA
Rehearsals begin January 8, 2008
Performances will be presented March 1 through March 29, 2008
No performance on Sunday, March 23, 2008

Prepare a song relative to the spirit of the show. Bring music in your key, an accompanist will be provided. No CD's or tapes please. Be prepared to dance/move. All roles open to all ethnicities.
Auditions will close PROMPTLY at times stated.
11 M, 5F lead and major supporting roles, plus ensemble of 15-20.

Director: Leslie Hardy Tamel; Music/Vocal Director: Greg Kambeitz;
Choreographer: Erin McKeivitt; Producer: Kris Dudley
For Information, call (408) 623-9901 or visit our Web Site: www.wvlo.org