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Stage Listings

BY RITA_FELCIANO - MARCH 8, 2011

THEATER

OPENING

Geezer Marsh, 1062 Valencia; (800) 838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$20-50. Previews Thurs, 8pm; Sat, 5pm; Sun, 3pm (through March 27). Opens March 31. Thurs, 8pm; Sat, 5pm; Sun, 3pm. Through May 1. The Marsh presents a new solo show about aging and mortality by Geoff Hoyle.

BAY AREA

Free Range Thinking Marsh Berkeley, TheaterStage, 2120 Allston, Berk; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$15-50. Previews Fri, 8pm; Sat, 5pm (through Sat/12). Opens March 18, 8pm. Runs Fri, 8pm; Sat, 5pm. Through April 9. The Marsh Berkeley presents a new comedic solo show by Robert Dubac.

ONGOING

***40 Pounds in 12 Weeks: A Love Story** The Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$15-35. Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8:30pm. Through March 26. "I hate assumptions," says Pidge Meade. In fact, her new solo show, about her experience as a young woman of size on a brutal crash diet, goes a long way toward unsettling more than one. Developed and directed by Charlie Varon (*Rush Limbaugh in Night School*, *Rabbi Sam*), Meade's multi-character monologue eschews easy sentiment for a sharply performed, consistently funny and genuine engagement with her younger, bigger self. Framed by a 20-year college reunion during which she suffers an unwanted conversation with an old roommate about her intervening dramatic weight loss, Meade recounts trying to lose 40 unwanted pounds to please her devoted but "harsh" father, an Olympic-level gymnastics coach shocked and appalled by her weight gain while at school. The father-daughter story comes interlarded with a few other encounters and characters measuring the variety of attitudes and approaches to weight among women in her Midwestern milieu. Meanwhile, Meade's problematic relationship with her demanding if ultimately responsive father finds an unexpected echo in her former roommate's pushy inquisitiveness (which, we learn, stems from her own desperate concern over a beloved but obese teen nephew). It's in quietly mingling awkwardness, fear, and love that Meade's piece can really surprise, and reaffirm that whatever else follows, it's the usual assumptions that need shedding first. (Avila)

James Bond: Lady Killer Dark Room Theater, 2263 Mission; 732-9592, www.brownpapertickets.com. \$20. Fri-Sat, 8pm. Through March 26. Dark Room Theater presents an all-new James Bond adventure.

***Loveland** Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$20-50. Fri, 8pm; Sat, 8:30pm. Through March 26. Ann Randolph's one-woman show extends its run.

Out of Sight Marsh, 1062 Valencia; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$15-50. Thurs and Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through March 27. Sara Felder's one-woman show extends its run.

Party of 2 – The New Mating Musical Shelton Theater, 533 Sutter; 1-800-838-3006, www.partyof2themusical.com. \$27-29. Sun, 3pm. Open-ended. A musical about relationships by *Shopping! The Musical* author Morris Bobrow.

***Pearls Over Shanghai** Thrillpeddlers' Hypnodrome, 575 Tenth St; 1-800-838-3006, www.brownpapertickets.com. \$30-69. Sat, 8pm. Through April 9. Thrillpeddlers' acclaimed production of the Cockettes musical continues its successful run.

Regrets Only New Conservatory Theatre Center, 25 Van Ness; 861-8972, www.nctcsf.org. \$24-40. Wed-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through April 3. New Conservatory Theatre presents a play by Paul Rudnick, directed by Andrew Nance.

Sex and Death: A Night with Harold Pinter Phoenix Theatre, Suite 601, 414 Mason; 1-800-838-3006, www.offbroadwaywest.org. \$35. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 26. The thing with Harold Pinter is you never know for certain whether he means for something to be funny or not. Take his most celebrated one-act, *The Dumb Waiter*, a rather tense dialogue between two hit-men waiting for their mark to show which veers into disarmingly surrealist territory once they start receiving mysterious lunch orders via a creaky dumbwaiter, despite not having any food, or indeed any gas to cook food on. Is this Pinter's attempt to lighten the mood in an otherwise joyless examination of two minor functionaries in the criminal underworld, or is it a way for him to interject more unease into their already intractable situation? In Off-Broadway West's staging they opt mainly for the latter interpretation, neither Gus (Conor Hamill) nor Ben (Shane Fahy) play up much of the sly humor tucked into their lines, and when the "surprise" twist arrives, it feels like a foregone conclusion. More deftly nuanced, the second one-act on the bill, *The Lover* milks the sex lives of the petty bourgeoisie for all the hidden wit and complicated innuendo that could possibly be excavated. Morphing from chilly society marrieds to shameless afternoon fling and "common garden slut" Chad Stender and Nicole Helfer play out a tightly-wound sexual fantasy with a cool edge, a satisfying end to a low-key revival. (Gluckstern)

Tenth Annual Bay One-Acts Festival Boxcar Theatre, 505 Natoma; 891-7235, www.bayoneacts.org. \$20-32. Wed-Fri, 8pm; Sat, 3 and 8pm; Sun, 3pm. Through March 26. Three Wise Monkeys Theatre Company presents the tenth incarnation of the curated festival.

BAY AREA

Death of a Salesman Pear Avenue Theatre, Mtn View; (650) 254-1148, www.thepear.org. \$15-30. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through March 20. Pear Avenue Theatre presents the Arthur Miller classic.

I Dream of Chang and Eng Zellerbach Playhouse, UC Berkeley campus; Berk; (510) 642-8827. \$10-15. Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 2pm. Through Sun/13. The original "Siamese twins"—Thailand-born Chinese conjoined twins and living "freak" exhibition of the American 19th century, Chang and Eng Bunker (Josemari Saenz and Andy Chan)—are bountiful subjects for this fictional re-imagining of their lives by internationally esteemed Bay Area playwright Philip Kan Gotanda. Slipping in and out of a poetical dreamscape and back again into history, the brothers are much more than metaphor, as their intersected lives the basis for a larger canvas of human connection, discovery, and strife. Characters from the King of Siam to P.T. Barnum populate the large beautifully detailed stage at UC Berkeley, against a historical backdrop that includes such resonant episodes of fraternal friction and racialized violence as the Civil War. At the same time, Gotanda takes care to craft two specific and very different individuals (the actors sometimes float away from one another in their solitary imaginations, but are otherwise joined by a band linking two slim harnesses). Indeed, this sprawling, fitful but often beautiful three-act play—imaginatively staged by Peter Glazer for the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies—works best when the drama gets intimate and concrete, as in a fascinating encounter between the brothers and a worldly, beguiled and beguiling English woman who briefly becomes their lover. She literally puts them before a rare full-length mirror at one point, to their amazement, but the three people in this scene are acting as mirrors to one another in so many ways. (Avila)

A Man's Home...an Ode to Kafka's Castle Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant; (510) 558-1381, www.centralworks.org. \$14-25. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun 5pm (also Sat/12, 5pm). Through Sun/13. Central Works pays homage to Franz.

Romeo and Juliet La Val's Subterranean, 1834 Euclid, Berk; www.impacttheatre.com. \$10-20. Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 26. Bet you thought *Romeo and Juliet* was just a sappy love story at its beating heart. But as Impact Theatre's artistic director Melissa Hillman, fight director Dave Meier, and production "blood technician" Tunuviel Luv manage to remind us, *R&J* is known as a tragedy for good reason—full of escalating violence and a bodycount almost as high as Hamlet's. Before they snuff it though, Romeo (Michael Garret McDonald) and Juliet (Luisa Frasconi) fall in love in a meet-cute, after-school special way: Frasconi exhibiting the coltish excitability of a very young teenager, and doofy McDonald egged on by a pack of uncouth youth (Seth Thygesen as Benvolio, Marilet Martinez as Mercutio, Miyuki Bierlein as Balthasar) who pretty much steal the show with their crass deconstruction of Romeo's woes. Unfortunately, the Russian mafia angle is less fully fleshed out than the teen romance portion of the show. Yes, the mobsters all sport some great tattoos, carry mean-looking pistols, and occasionally deliver their lines in Russian thanks to language consultant Helen Nesteruk, but setting the show in the ex-pat Russian community "in the Bay Area" dilutes the extreme feudalism that setting the show in Moscow would imply, and allows the production to rely a little too heavily on familiar California-isms—phrases, behaviors, and fashions— rather than committing fully to exploring the vastly different world of the *Russkaya Mafiya*. (Gluckstern)

Ruined Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison, Berk; (510) 647-2949, www.berkeleyrep.org. \$29-73. Call for dates and times. Through April 10. Berkeley Rep presents Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer-winning play about the lives of women in Africa.

World's Funniest Bubble Show The Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston Way, Berk; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. \$8-11. Sun, 11am. Through April 3. The Amazing Bubble Man extends the bubble-making celebration.

PERFORMANCE/DANCE

BAY AREA

Marga's Funny Mondays Cabaret at Marsh Berkeley, 2120 Allston; 1-800-838-3006, www.themarsh.org. Mon/28, 8pm. \$10. Marga Gomez hosts a Monday night comedy series.

Stage listings are compiled by Guardian staff. Performance times may change; call venues to confirm. Reviewers are Robert Avila, Rita Felciano, and Nicole Gluckstern. Submit items for the listings at listings@sfbg.com. For further information on how to submit items for the listings, see Picks. For complete listings, see www.sfbg.com.

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