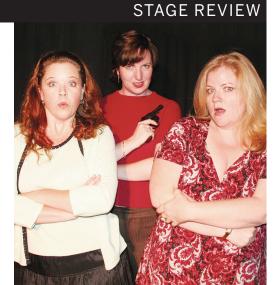
# **Wives** Tale

At Dragon Theatre, three women dish in the kitchen

ICHELE 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



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

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 Gorrebeeck, 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 coldblooded 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

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for

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)

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

#### **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

*Animalitia*. 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

#### **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.

#### **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.

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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 Iznaola, guitar with Linda Wang, violin

Sunday, Nov. 18, 7:00 pm San Jose Stage Company

490 South First St., downtown San José \$25/\$20 Assigned seating, \$15 General Call (408) 292-0704 or order on-line at www.sbgs.org

For more information, call 408 251-8440 or visit www.svarts.org. The Silicon Valley Arts Coalition visibility and expand audiences for small-budget organizations.

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With the Mission Chamber Orchestra and Menlo School Chorus

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\$20 General, \$16 Student/Senior, \$8 Child www.sanjosesymphonicchoir.org (408) 995-3318

# **Music at the Mission** and Music@Market "Poémes"

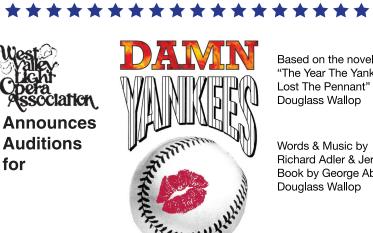
Three dazzling artists in a passionate program of 20th Century works: Lucy Shelton, soprano, Cynthia Mei, violin, and Stephen Gosling, piano.

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

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> **Silicon Valley Arts Coalition**



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

Words & Music by Richard Adler & Jerry Ross Douglass Wallop

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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.

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