

Published September 16th, 2009

## Art - A Delightful Moment at Town Hall Theater

By Sophie Braccini



Picture courtesy of Town Hall Theater

30 languages. The play has been an international hit. The London production received the 1996-97 Laurence Olivier Award and Evening Standard Award. It also won the Tony Award for Best Play.

Clive Worsley, Town Hall Artistic Director, had seen the play in San Francisco and wanted to bring it to Lafayette. "One reason I chose this play is because I felt that it was relevant to many of us. I've known people who have had similar difficulties in friendships and relationships over disagreements about art or musical tastes."

Reza scrapes human relations and their motivations to the bone. The wry humor that ensues surprised and totally delighted a Lamorinda audience at a recent performance.

"I think it's an incredibly funny play, although not all productions of this piece play towards that comedy. Which I think is a shame," said Worsley. The text is efficient and funny, the setting by Maya Linke is simple, almost symbolic, but efficient at transporting the spectators from one apartment to the next. Director Soren Oliver highlights the play's humor and sets a fast paced and precise tempo.

The three actors are very experienced. Serge is played by Garth Petal. He gives the character an almost na<sup>天</sup> strength and vigor that adds to the charm of the play. James Hiser is a powerful Marc, leonine and self-righteous, his abruptness contrasts perfectly with Yvan's vulnerability, played with disarming humor by Dennis Markam. The conclusion can be seen as cynical, an ultimate surrender to social standards. The Lafayette production leans more toward a hopeful and poetic conclusion, leaving the audience feeling enriched by the experience, and maybe a little bit more tolerant.

The Town Hall Theater, located at the corner of School Street and Moraga Way in Lafayette, was recently renovated after a fire. "Art" is the first play of the 2009-2010 season and will run until October 3rd. It will be followed by Scrooge from December 3rd to the 20th and Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest in March 2010. For reservations call 283-1557.

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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French writer Yasmina Reza's "Art" opened at Town Hall Theater (THT) on September 3. Set in three Parisian apartments, the play tells the very humorous story of three men whose friendship hangs by a thread when one purchases an expensive piece of modern art. Serge, a dermatologist who sees himself as a budding art collector, just bought a very controversial and expensive painting. He wants to share it with his friend Marc, a more traditional thinking engineer. Serge's enthusiasm is met with more than skepticism by his friend. As for Yvan, the third member of the friendship triangle, his desire to please everyone will just make things worse. A reflection on human relations and modern art, the play is a joyous comedy offered up at THT by three very strong local actors.

In 1995, 'Art' premiered in Paris and went on to win the Moli<sup>天</sup> Award for Best Author. Since then it has been produced world-wide and translated and performed in over