

“God of Carnage” Opens at Town Hall Theatre Feb. 22

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Jacquie Duckworth, Derrick Silva, Henry Perkins, and Suzie Shepard. Photo Stu Selland

Civilization may give us polish, but contemporary playwright Yasmina Reza shows us that underneath it all, humans are torn with frustration and pain that can erupt into violence. Set in a city that could easily be San Francisco, New York, or Paris (Reza is French), the play is the humorous story of what happens to us when the “God of Carnage” arises and the veneer falls away.

“God of Carnage” tells the story of parents from two civilized families – the Novaks and the Raleighs – who meet to discuss an altercation that occurred between their two 11-year-old sons, resulting in one of them losing front teeth. The meeting takes place in the Novaks’ living room and soon turns into a fight between families and sexes. Alan Raleigh (played by Derrick Silva) is a business lawyer, his wife Annette (Jacquie Duckworth) is a wealth manager; Michael Novak (Henry Perkins) owns a wholesale hardware company, his wife Veronica (Suzie Shepard) writes

books about Africa.

Alan keeps responding to business calls; Annette vomits after being lectured by Veronica, who turns on her own husband; the foursome reproducing the violence that engulfed their children.

The humor comes from the way the play is constructed: the gradual deterioration of the relationships; Reza’s understanding of human character; and the slight caricature of the participants who are reminiscent of people we all know.

Director Susan Hovey, who previously produced “The Graduate” for Town Hall Theatre, and who also directs at Contra Costa Civic Theatre and Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre, says, “This play is about parents, and marriage, and adulthood. The play shows the inner battle between the savage instincts that you have to control and the civil decency that you have to rein in so you don’t sound phony. And everyone can relate to that.” She adds that the comic aspect of the play

comes from the difference between where the characters start and where they end up.

The team had only five weeks to put the play together, and a few days before opening night the tempo still needed tightening, especially at the beginning. Alan’s constant phone interruptions were not marked enough, maybe because there were no sound effects, and the actor was sometimes hard to understand. The women were already at the top of their game, wonderfully energetic and funny, losing control with flair.

The short play (1 hour and 10 minutes, with no intermission) will make you laugh; it is a superb opportunity for intelligent entertainment.

“God of Carnage” runs from Feb. 22 to March 15 at Town Hall Theatre at the corner of Moraga Road and School Street in Lafayette. For tickets, contact the Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557, or purchase online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Boomers Invited to Find Balance and Bone Up on Health

By Laurie Snyder

If you’ve reached the stage of life where the snap, crackle and pop of your morning breakfast cereal is being drowned out by the creaking of joints, it may be time for a visit to the Orinda Library.

On March 7, library staff will join forces with the Orinda Parks and Recreation Department and Friends of the Orinda Library to get area residents moving with the launch of “Health Matters for Boomers and Beyond: Embracing the Benefits of Living a Balanced Lifestyle.” The free lecture series will kick off at 9:30 a.m. with a lecture on Bone Health and Aging by Bay Area chiropractor and women’s health expert, Lani Simpson, DC, CCD (www.lanisimpson.com/biography/). Pre-registration is not required.

Dr. Simpson, a certified clinical bone densitometrist, “has been researching and studying bone health for the past 20 years,” says Orinda Library manager Beth Girshman. Experienced at educating adults regarding life

changing health challenges they are or will be experiencing, she also co-founded the Menopause and PMS Center and the Osteoporosis Diagnostic Center in Berkeley, and teaches other healthcare practitioners about spinal anatomy and osteology.

During a 20-minute session break, participants will be given a special opportunity to try out one of three fitness options that have been much in the news of late – yoga, Zumba Gold, or improving balance.

Attendees will then hear from Saskia Kleinert, NC, CMT, founder and Director of the Emeryville Wellness Center (www.integrativehealthnutrition.com/). Kleinert, who will speak about Nutrition and Aging Well from 11 a.m. until noon, is a third degree black belt who has taught massage therapy and health education at the National Holistic Institute in Emeryville. In private practice since 1993, she has received training at Dr. Andrew Weil’s Institute of Integrative Medicine and Hawthorn Univer-

sity. “My goal,” she explains, “is to bring equilibrium to the body, mind and spirit through integrative health and wellness care.”

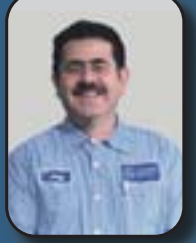
So, if you’re tired of sounding like a wounded buffalo when you get up to grab that second morning cup of coffee, be there or be square. Registration begins at the Orinda Library Auditorium at 9 a.m. Coffee, tea and treats will be available. For more information, contact Girshman at: (925) 254-2184, ext. 15; bgirshma@ccclib.org. Or, visit: www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.org.



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