

buffalounitedartists presents

The Casual Sex Diary

A story about the people who touch one's life... briefly.

written and performed by
Matthew Crehan Higgins
directed by **Dava Jones**

March 31 - April 8
Fridays & Saturdays @ 8pm
Main Street Cabaret
672 Main Street - Buffalo, NY
\$20 general - \$15 students
Call to reserve! 716/886-9239
BuffaloBUA.org

photo by Jose Acevedo



THEATERWEEK

BY ANTHONY CHASE



left to-right, top-bottom: Lisa Ludwig, Paul Todaro, Jim Mohr, and Anne Gayley star in *The Cocktail Hour*. PHOTO BY IRENE HAUPT

lack of artistic leadership at the institution which has been in evidence for some time.

Of course such topics do beg the question, what in the world is going on down at Studio Arena Theatre? Word is that we are nearing a decision on the choice of an artistic director and that there are finalists. A lot rests on this choice and we can only keep our fingers crossed.

THE COCKTAIL HOUR

At long last, Buffalo can see A.R. Gurney's 1988 play, *The Cocktail Hour*. After *The Dining Room*, *The Cocktail Hour* is arguably Gurney's most celebrated play, and yet, because it is partially autobiographical, the playwright never allowed it to be performed here in his hometown. After the death of his mother, however, Gurney re-

lent, and the Kavinoky Theatre successfully obtained the rights.

The original production—which originated at the Old Globe in San Diego, under the direction of Jack O'Brien—famously starred Buffalonian Nancy Marchand as an upper-class Buffalo matron whose son comes home, announcing that he has written a play—about the family.

Writing for the *New York Times*, Frank Rich said, "The laughter in Act I is almost continuous, and much of it is prompted by Ms. Marchand's irresistible suburban grande dame... Just to hear the actress order a refill of her martini—a frequent occurrence—is to get a lesson in comic timing and inflection."

Anne Gayley, resident Grande Dame of the Kavinoky Theatre plays the role in this production, giving the part her individual stamp. Whereas Marchand had been stalwart in her control of her frustrations, Gayley allows the woman to slip, just perceptibly, into inebriation before nudging the evening back under her control.

Jim Mohr is very appealing as the husband, in a performance that renders the man far more vulnerable and considerably less laughable than Keene Curtis's original. The interpretation is very effective and serves the play admirably.

Lisa Ann Ludwig who often tilts toward the presentational, here employs her realistic side in a most satisfying portrayal of the daughter, originally played by Holland Taylor.

Paul Todaro wrestles with the role that is generally agreed to be the knot of the script's difficulties. In this effort, he employs his familiar charm and good humor, and generously hands most of the laughs to those around him.

Depending on your personal history with Gurney, *The Cocktail Hour* is either worth waiting for, or nice to see again in this most handsome production, directed by David Lamb.

(Incidentally, the detail that blocked the play from production involves a possible marital infidelity on the part of Ann, the mother character. Marital infidelity is a common theme in Gurney's plays and also serves as a plot device in *Ancestral Voices*. The playwright has long since admitted that this real life event in these plays is a reference to his grandmother—not his mother).

To respond to this article, e-mail editorial@artvoice.com or write to: Artvoice, 810 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14202

av

NEGLIA BALLET ARTISTS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH UB CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENTS

DON QUIXOTE

Starring:
Sherri Campagni as Kitri
Sergio Neglia as Basilio
Jason Bravo as Don Quixote
David Butler as Sancho Panza

"Back by popular Demand!"

"Special appearance by Michele Costa."

Tickets: Center Box Office
(Mon-Fri 10am - 6pm) and ticketmaster.com
CHARGE 852-5000 INFO 645-ARTS
CANADA 416-870-8000 www.ubcfa.org
Group sales, more info 447-0401,
www.negliaballet.org



SATURDAY MARCH 18, 2006 7:00 PM
UB CENTER FOR THE ARTS

"The entire family will be enchanted by the humorous antics of the lively characters and world class dancing."

