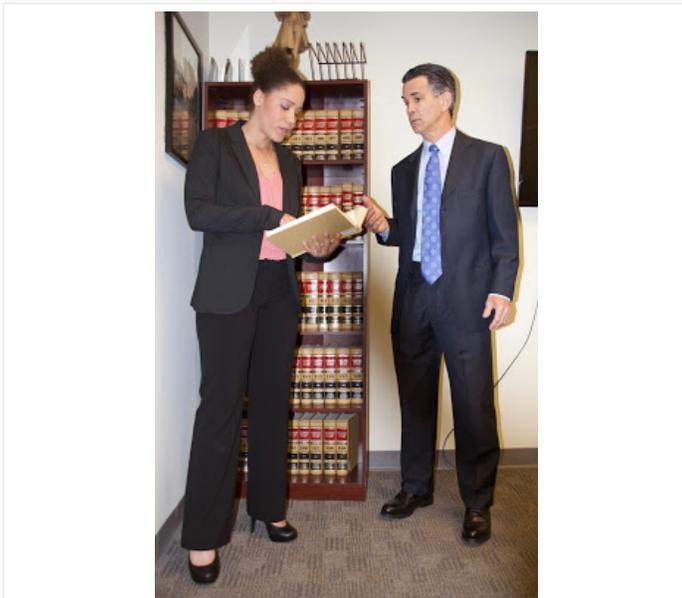


# AISLE SAY San Francisco

Judy Richter has been reviewing San Francisco Bay Area theater for more than 40 years. She is a retired newspaper journalist who lives in the Bay Area.

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## Dragon stages Mamet's provocative 'Race'



Hannah Mary Keller is Susan and Martin Gagen is Charles in "Race." (Dragon Theatre photo)

Accused of raping a young black woman in a hotel room, a wealthy, middle-aged white man says he didn't do it and seeks legal help.

That's the premise for David Mamet's "Race," presented by Dragon Theatre Company.

The lawyers that Charles Strickland (Martin Gagen) consults are the low-key, white Jack Lawson (Pat Caulfield, the show's producer) and the more volatile, black Henry Brown (Dorian Lockett).

After talking with him for a while, the two partners decide they don't want to take the case because they don't think they can win it. They're not concerned with guilt or innocence.

However, their young black associate, Susan (Hannah Mary Keller), assuming she's doing what they want, commits them to the case.

From then on, the two partners try to work the angles to defend him. They often answer his questions as well as Susan's questions with questions of their own.

Much of the case hinges on the red sequined dress that the victim said Charles ripped off her. In the end, it's not totally clear what a jury's verdict would be, but Susan knows what hers is.

In less than two hours, Mamet evokes issues of racism, sexism, ageism and class privilege. The sexism is most apparent as the two law partners keep referring to Susan and the victim as girls.

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### About Me



#### Judy Richter

Judy reviews San Francisco Bay Area theater and writes feature articles about activities of the Stanford Women's Basketball team and Fast Break Club. A longtime Bay Area journalist, she is retired from the San Francisco Chronicle, where she was a writer and copy editor.

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Director Kimberly Ridgeway paces the action well, but she allows Henry to become so blustery that he seems to verge on violence.

Otherwise, this production is effective with a simple uncredited set, lighting by Jon Gourdine and sound by Lana Palmer.

Unlike earlier, 90-minute productions at American Conservatory Theater and San Jose Stage Company, this one has an intermission.

With its mature themes and language, “Race” is best suited for adults.

It continues through April 8 at Dragon Theatre, 2120 Broadway St., Redwood City. For tickets and information, call (650) 493-2006, Ext. 2, or visit [www.dragonproductions.net](http://www.dragonproductions.net).

Posted by Judy Richter at 3:08 PM



## 'Music Man' marches onto Broadway by the Bay stage



Harold Hill (David Schiller) tries to romance Marian Paroo (Jennifer Mitchell). Photo by Mark Kitaoka and Tracy Martin

Broadway by the Bay brings on the marching band with its production of a perennial favorite, Meredith Willson’s “The Music Man.”

Set in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this is the story of a slick, traveling salesman, Harold Hill (David Schiller), who cons residents of little River City, Iowa, into buying band instruments, lesson books and uniforms for their kids.

Harold doesn’t know the first thing about the instruments or music, but he does know how to charm people by flattering them and bringing out positive qualities. Therefore, even though he fleeces them, he leaves a lot of good in his wake.

For example, feuding school board members forget their differences when they become a barbershop quartet (Derrick Contreras, Jonathan Chan, Daniel Lloyd Pias and Mohammed Ismail) singing the likes of “Lida Rose.”