

Elana McKernan's Editor's Picks: October 2011 by / Elana McKernan

Sister Cities

Dragon Productions Theatre Company

Thru Oct. 23

When I stay on Facebook for too long, clicking through seemingly endless pictures of my friends doing awesome things without me, I think to myself, "If only you had sisters, Elana, you'd be living it up with them instead of sitting in your room, in the dark, like a technologically savvy hermit." Usually, though, I'm able to counteract such silliness by either standing up and going outside or watching the first half of a family drama and then turning it off before the predictable happy resolution. When I see sisters tormenting each other, sabotaging each other's chances at happiness and stealing each other's lovers, I am instantly thankful for my three older brothers. *Sister Cities* promises a good share of drama when four sisters with vastly different personalities (Carolina, Baltimore, Dallas and Austin) are forced to reunite after their mother's abrupt death. The result is a dark, moving and hilarious exploration of the nature of family and the ties that bind. Although I expect Colette Freedman's *Sister Cities* will offer its share of sisterly love, I have no intention of leaving at intermission. Visit dragonproductions.net.

Hanging Georgia

BootStrap Theater Foundation & TheatreFirst

Oct. 8–30

From the playwright and composer that brought us *Tell It Slant*, 2009's engaging rumination on the life and works of Emily Dickinson, comes *Hanging Georgia*, a world-premiere play about American artist Georgia O'Keeffe. The show promises to be "highly physical with interludes of music and movement that evoke aspects of O'Keeffe's art." Director Jake Margolin has worked as an actor, a creator of devised work and a performance/installation artist, and he channels his diverse artistic background into this show, guaranteeing that the result will be as much an exploration of collaborative theatre-making as it is an examination of O'Keeffe's life. Playwright Sharmon J. Hilfinger and composer Joan McMillen chronicle O'Keeffe's journey from Texas art teacher to New York icon, as well as her passionate relationship with photographer/art dealer Alfred Stieglitz. *Hanging Georgia* is both a love story and a lens through which the ensemble explores the nature of artmaking itself. TheatreFirst artistic director (and seasoned actor) Michael Storm will costar as Stieglitz to Bay Area native Paz Pardo's O'Keeffe.

Visit theatrefirst.com.

Man Without a Mask

Catchy Name Theatre Company

Oct. 9–Nov. 6

I secretly wish my life were like a film noir movie, even though I am quite cowardly and have never met a trench coat I liked. Fortunately, playwright Jim Stroppe has provided me with a perfect solution: Rather than take up a life of crime and wander the foggy streets of San Francisco with dark sunglasses, bright red lips and a cigarette hanging out of my mouth, I should just see the world premiere of *Man Without a Mask*, billed as “a dark mystery of crime and identity set in upper class San Francisco.” Thanks, Jim, for saving me from a series of tragic and morally ambiguous events, not to mention lung cancer! Visit catchynametheatre.org.

The View from Castle Rock

University of San Francisco

Oct. 20–29

Some of the most exciting theatre in the Bay Area can be seen on college campuses. USF’s Performing Arts and Social Justice majors have tackled Alice Munro’s short story about the ocean crossing of a group of 18th-century Scottish immigrants on their way to Canada. This tale of hardship and hope follows patriarch James Laidlaw and his family as they attempt to make a new life in a new land. The theatrical interpretation of the story promises to be a rich examination of tragedy, persistence and yearning for a better life—a must-see for any Munro fans. Visit usfca.edu/artsci/pa/events.