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## Women shine in 'Or,' at Dragon Theatre

October 10, 2015, 05:00 AM By [Judy Richter](#) Daily Journal

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In the monologue that opens "Or," the main character expounds on "a dense array of seeming opposites" presented by the title of this play written by Liz Duffy Adams and presented by Dragon Theatre.

The character is Aphra Behn (Kathryn Han), believed to be one of the first female professional playwrights writing in English. Before then, she was an English spy.

The action takes place in about 1666 after the restoration of King Charles II (Michael Wayne Rice) to the English throne.

He becomes Aphra's patron and wants to become her lover, but she refuses those advances to focus on completing her new play.

She does not refuse the advances of boyish actress Nell Gwynne (Naomi Evans), nor does Nell refuse the king.

Rice portrays the other male character, William Scot, Aphra's former lover who was a double agent and who might be involved in a plot to kill the king.

Behn, Charles and Scot were all real people, as was Lady Davenant (Doll Piccotto), the theatrical producer who wants to stage Behn's play. Piccotto also plays Aphra's maid, Maria.

There are farcical and melodramatic elements as Aphra tries to keep Nell, the king and William from discovering each other in her apartment.

Directed by Vera Sloan, the three women are all excellent. Han is resourceful and articulate as Aphra, while Evans is engagingly exuberant as Nell. Piccotto wows the audience as the outlandishly theatrical Lady Davenant.

With his scraggly beard, Rice is less effective as the two men, lacking Charles' charisma and William's desperation. To give him his due, however, he may have been hampered by an injury that had him wearing an orthopedic shoe.

When Magic Theatre presented the West Coast premiere of this play in 2010, it used only two women and one man. Other companies around the country have done the same, but given the talents of the three women here, Dragon's expanded cast works well.

The sound design by Brittany S. Mellerson can be intrusive when it uses music.

The show runs about 100 minutes with no intermission.

"Or," will continue through Oct. 25 at Dragon Theatre, 2120 Broadway, Redwood City. For tickets and information call (650) 493-2006 or visit [www.dragonproductions.net](http://www.dragonproductions.net).



**James Kasyan**  
Kathryn Han stars as Aphra Behn in 'Or.'

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