

Nicky Silver's

THE ALTRUISTS

a wicked comedy

"GO SEE 'THE ALTRUISTS.' The Pisces Moon Production of Nicky Silver's *The Altruists* now at the Broadway Playhouse is well worth seeing. The play races from gutsy laughs and sardonic humor to Hitchcock suspense, sadness and tragedy. It's well cast, excellently acted and paced, and just one of the best evenings of theater I can remember in our county. It plays Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays through Oct. 5. I'd call 429.2339 for tickets if I were you."

-- Bruce Bratton, Metro Santa Cruz says [Link to article](#)

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PERFORMANCES:

From September 6 to October 5, 2002

8:00 PM Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays

TICKETS:

Call 831.429.2339 \$12 per ticket. 2 for 1 on Thursdays.

LOCATION:

Broadway Playhouse – 526 Broadway (at Ocean) in Santa Cruz

THE ALTRUISTS:

Subject material is inappropriate for those under the age of 18. The story revolves around the antics of five New Yorkers (of course!): Sydney, a soap opera star; Ethan, her boyfriend, a self-styled activist and Lothario; Ronald, her brother, a social worker; Lance, his new love interest, a male prostitute and Cybil, a militant lesbian who is also sleeping with Ethan (who is also sleeping with any female who crosses his path). They are played, respectively, by Kristen Vaughan, Daniel Hughes, Troy Burgos, Chris Sugarman and Misti Boettiger. The plot involves a murder and the attempts by the group to cover it up. It has greed, power struggles, sex, wealth and obsession, all mixed together with Nicky Silver's brand of extreme, sharp-edged humor.

New York Newsday called it "Hilarious...the extravagantly amusing Nicky Silver has written one of his most consistent explosions of dark yet good-natured satire...we are carried aloft on the demented joy of [his] hyperarticulate imagination."

See a copy of the Show's [Poster](#) (Requires Adobe Acrobat)

DON'T MISS OUT ANY FUTURE GREAT SHOWS:

To be notified about future PISCES MOON productions, please join our [Mail List](#)



Review from Sep 12, 2002 issue of Good Times

Arts & Entertainment

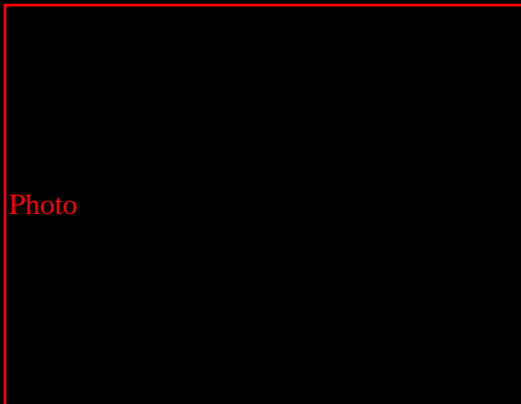
Naked Emotions

Pisces Moon offers another hit stage show with 'The Altruists'

by Christa Martin

Pisces Moon Productions is changing the face of the Santa Cruz theater scene. (It's about time.) In their new show, "The Altruists," is a cast of talented actors, notable directing, a luscious set and profound writing that will either piss you off or turn you on. And know this: \$12 will get you 90 minutes of mesmerizing entertainment—you won't notice that there's no intermission.

Director Susan Myer offers her second show this year after a successful run of "The Laramie Project." Both shows establish Pisces Moon as "the" cutting edge company in town because it provokes thought, stirs up delicious controversy, takes risks and its shows are perfectly cast. Performances aren't a platform for people in need of therapy, and the serious nature of the work chosen is what you'd typically see in a big city like San Francisco. Playing at the Broadway Theater in Santa Cruz, it's best to buy tickets soon as it will likely sell out, as did "The Laramie Project."



LOVE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER "The Altruists" cast (l to r) Misti Boettiger (Cybil), Daniel Hughes (Ethan), Kristen Vaughan (Sydney), Troy Burgos (Ronald) and Chris Sugarman (Lance).

"The Altruists" would probably be rated R—it's racy. Billed as appropriate for those 18 and over because of heavy kissing and sexually implied situations—between both gay and straight couples—the show also features a gun being discharged on stage. The subject material, with some gratuitous language, is directed toward a mature audience.

The story is about five New Yorkers with frazzled lives who are somehow all interconnected. Love and obsession run amok here, a sibling relationship is tested, and the definition of "altruism" is questioned. But not in a blatantly obvious way—it's suggested through the writing and by the choices of the characters.

Myer and her co-producer/co-founder of the company, Chris Sugarman, found a quintet of thespians who are wonderful to watch in “The Altruists,” which is said to be a comedy, although there is a heavy dose of dramatic elements weaved throughout.

The entire cast is noteworthy: Kristen Vaughan as Sydney the soap opera star; Sugarman as Lance the male prostitute; Troy Burgos as Ronald the social worker; Daniel Hughes as Ethan the playboy; Misti Boettiger as Cybil the activist. It’s beautiful to watch these actors embody their roles. Rarely, if ever, does it feel like they are “acting.” Instead, the audience almost feels voyeuristic, like we’re invading the private lives of five people plagued with their own insecurities. Myer has plucked out many “moments” with these actors, meaning that she and the cast have found ways to bring truth to the playwright’s words and actions. They bring reality to the stage; they’re grounded and honest. Such “moments” include doing ordinary things like eating from a bag of M&Ms, urinating in a toilet while writing a letter, brushing their hair while staring into a non-existing mirror. Such things are what bring a play to life and create challenging yet true performances. Also noteworthy in the show is that many of the actors have long monologues, but they never break their genuineness, and we as an audience never break our attention. Bravo to the entire cast for a stupendous job.

It’s obvious that an impressive amount of work was put into this show. In one visual sweep of the stage, we see three sets—each is the bedroom of three different people, and it works quite successfully. The rooms are perfectly decorated, each one different and befitting of the character whose room it is. There’s the decadent bedroom of Sydney, the soap opera star, complete with pictures of herself—perfect because she’s self-centered. Then there’s her social worker brother, Ronald, who has a simple room that boasts the color blue. Cybil’s room is grungy and anger-fueled—spray-painted political messages clutter the walls.

Many nuances of the plot stand out. One night Ronald brings home Lance, a man he picked up at a bar. After their night of sex, he discovers that Lance is a male prostitute, but Ronald has fallen “in love” and will do anything to keep his Prince Charming. Meanwhile, Ethan, Sydney’s boyfriend, is cavorting with Cybil, a lesbian activist who enjoys sexual trysts with men while fighting for the rights of the oppressed. (Most of the time, she can’t remember who or what she’s protesting.) Sydney, who is solely concerned with herself, takes an ugly turn at the end of the play, where she demands “family” support from her brother. (I won’t tell anymore about the plot, because it’s full of surprises, and you should go experience it.)

Be forewarned that risqué scenes are featured, including half-naked sexual romps from each tormented pair of actors, including the two men, to oral-sex simulations. Myer handles these sexual moments with tact, choosing to cover one person up with a sheet while the other reacts and the audience watches. Or in another scene, a couple is hidden behind a bed, taking turns popping up and moaning while an implied sex act is being performed. Also, most of the characters disrobe to their underwear.

Nicky Silver wrote this play, and he also wrote “The Food Chain,” which Pisces Moon performed in

Photo

SECRETS AND LIES Troy Burgos as Ronald, falls “in love” with Lance, a male prostitute, played by Chris Sugarman.

2000. This show, like Pisces Moon's other shows, is edgy, provocative, borderline controversial, and shows that good theater exists in Santa Cruz.

"The Altruists" plays at 8 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays until Oct. 5 at the Broadway Playhouse, 526 Broadway, Santa Cruz. Tickets are \$12. Thursdays are two-for-one admission. For more information, call 429-2339.

Read the Santa Cruz Sentinel's [preview article](#) for The Altruists

"Altruists' provide wicked laughs" Read the Santa Cruz Sentinel's [full review](#)

Good Times Entertainment Weekly

September 5, 2002

"Expect good things when Susan Myer hits the helm of any local theater production. This director has deservedly earned a reputation for serving Santa Cruz with stellar shows. Her last project was "The Laramie Project," and, simply put, it was excellent. Next up on Myer's plate this time is a comedy, "The Altruists." But don't expect goofy theatrics or a place where amateur actors can flex their beginning muscles. Myer chooses fine actors and thematic scripts that relay a message. "The Altruists" is about a quintet of New Yorkers who stir up life with sex, money, and murder." –
Christa Martin