



The Eight: Reindeer Monologues

"indulge yourself in an hour-and-a-half of pure bliss . . . an evening of irreverent, irrelevant and irresistible satire"

-- [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#)

"stellar cast . . . exceptional performances . . . very entertaining and thought provoking"

-- [Register-Pajaronian](#)

***Now Playing through Sunday Dec. 21st
Broadway Playhouse***

[Ticket Info](#)

"First, there was the wickedly funny 'Bad Santa' . . . Now there's 'The Eight: Reindeer Monologues.'" - Santa Cruz Sentinel

[Read the full Sentinel preview](#)

[Read the full Sentinel Review](#)

[Read the full Register-Pajaronian Review](#)



Pisces Moon's upcoming show, *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues* by Jeff Goode, is the *real* nightmare before Christmas. Vixen has the rest of Santa's reindeer in quite a tangle that has nothing to do with jingle bell-studded harnesses. She has accused none other than the Jolly Old Elf himself of sexual harassment, holding a press conference to expose the salacious underbelly of the North Pole. Santa vehemently denies the charge as the rest of the Eight take sides, causing unrest among the ranks. Now it's time for all of the reindeer to tell their side of the scandal, laying bare the out-of-control egos, elf abuse and Toyland labor violations in this wicked, naughty, bawdy Christmas tale. It's not your father's Christmas anymore. In fact, seeing *The Eight:*

Reindeer Monologues may be the end of Christmas as you know it! We strongly urge you to leave the kids home for their own good. Get a sitter and let them watch reruns of what Hollywood (nee Prancer) calls "that claymation piece of crap" *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*.

Yet, if you think this is just another piece of seasonal fluff, beware! *The Eight* continues the Pisces Moon tradition of dark comedy with a message. This is thought-provoking satire, as each reindeer embodies one of society's ills in a believable, sometimes moving characterization. Dasher's macho spin on the events is juxtaposed with Cupid's raving homosexual rant. Prancer disses Rudolph, who stole the thunder from his own Hollywood movie. The radical feminist Blitzen supports Vixen's claims, stating "The sleigh ride is over". Comet refuses to believe the allegations, as she was saved from a life on the streets by the saintly Nick. Dancer refuses to go on strike with the other reindeer, declaring "I need this job." The final moments, with Donner's

poignant monologue about his outcast son Rudolph and Vixen's deeply wounded bravado, remind us of our own vulnerability.

What the critics have said...

"Jeff Goode's arresting funny black comedy twists holiday icons into demented knots as each reindeer, Rashomon-style, tells what it knows or does not know about what really happened in the North Pole."
The Village Voice

"...a tart alternative to candy-cane cheer...wickedly topical"
The New York Times

"wickedly funny"
Los Angeles Times

"wicked"
Chicago Sun-Times

"Brilliant. Clever. Wonderful. For those who appreciate stage excellence, this is a must see."
Drama-logue

"brilliant satire of gender and sexual politics in contemporary America, filled with penetrating humor"
L.A. Weekly

CAST

Becky Armor: Vixen
Randy Birch: Donner
Daniel David Doane: Dasher
Nathaniel Meek: Prancer
Manirose Raley: Blitzen
Terri Steinmann: Dancer
Christopher Sugarman: Cupid
Linda Turner: Comet

CREW

Co-Directors: Terri Steinmann and Christopher Sugarman
Producers: Susan Myer and Christopher Sugarman

VENUE

Broadway Playhouse in the Santa Cruz Art League, 526 Broadway (at Ocean) in Santa Cruz

RUN DATES & TIMES

Thursday December 11 at 8 PM: Opening
Friday December 12 8 PM
Saturday December 13 at 8 PM
Sunday December 14 at 3 PM
Thursday December 18 at 8 PM
Friday December 19 at 8 PM
Saturday December 20 at 8 PM
Sunday December 21 at 3 PM: Closing

TICKETS:

Reserve tickets by calling (831) 429-2328. All seats are \$12.00. ADULTS ONLY!

The Santa Cruz Sentinel Review

December 18, 2003

Antidote for a too sweet Christmas

By ANN BENNETT
SENTINEL THEATER REVIEWER

If by now you've heard enough of the "Little Drummer Boy," and you're ready to join the "Bah, Humbug" club — have I got a play for you!

Escape saccharine television fare and the vast world of ugly consumerism, shake off the sloppy sentimentalism and the oppressive bombardment of advertising, and get real.

Or rather, get unreal.

Pisces Moon Productions is giving you a chance to get away from the season's sappy joyfulness and indulge yourself in an hour-and-a-half of pure bliss. The company's gift to all you cynical celebrants is an evening of irreverent, irrelevant and irresistible satire, a show that deserves to become a holiday tradition (but probably won't).

"The Eight: Reindeer Monologues," by Jeff Goode, is a wickedly clever black comedy that gives political incorrectness a whole new aspect.

Imagine the North Pole, Santa's Workshop, Mrs. Claus, the elves and all the rest of that seasonal fluff. Now imagine what happens when the reindeer find themselves embroiled in all sorts of issues — elf abuse, labor violations, sexual harassment and some other issues that I'll let you discover for yourselves.

"The Eight" are shocked and stunned, and each has his or her own take on the assorted scandals. Oddly enough, despite the hilarious and generally bawdy mood of Goode's script, there is much gentleness and introspection in the play, and the evening ends on an unexpectedly poignant note.

"The Eight," of course, are the eight unique flying reindeer who pull Santa and his magic sleigh around the world on Christmas Eve, delivering toys to all the happy children.

OK, you've got that.

Now you get to meet them as interpreted by an ensemble of eight very clever actors. Directed with imagination and energy by two of the ensemble, Terri Steinmann and Christopher Sugarman, this octet creates a most unlikely vision of life at the North Pole — and believe me, it's not all sugarplums.

The two directors are also the two flashiest reindeer. Steinmann plays Dancer with a splendid Valley Doe twist. She doesn't have to say a word to crack up the audience, but when she does say something, it's even funnier. Under the comedy, however, is vulnerability, and Steinmann does it all with real class.

Sugarman parlays his role as Cupid into a one-man show that goes far beyond describable. His send-up is entirely without redeeming social value — which means it is Sugarman at his very best and most outrageous, and his performance has to be seen (and heard) to be believed.

Daniel David Doane plays the intrepid Dasher with a tough biker's belligerence, kicking off the evening's monologues with fine spirit. Manirose Raley happily plays Blitzen as a gleeful provocateur. She's a femi-nazi reindeer with her own agenda, so to speak; she makes her points without subtlety and without much regard for any of the other reindeer.

Prancer (aka "Hollywood") is presented with L.A. fervor by the delightful Nathaniel Meek, who gives us the treatment, baby, with appropriate self-indulgence while he bitterly denounces the good fortune of Rudolph (who isn't in this play).

Linda Turner is Comet, a self-described nasty Hell's Reindeer who is saved from a sinful past by Santa — and therefore owes allegiance to St. Nick for offering salvation and a second chance at life.

The versatile Randy Birch provides an unexpectedly intense monologue of pain and recrimination as the complex Donner. I won't give away the story of poor Rudolph, except to say that Birch's performance is wonderfully rueful.

The last of the gang of eight, Vixen, naturally, is the sexpot whose allegations are the basis for the evening's entertainment, and Becky Armor winds up the show nicely as she takes the role by the antlers and gives a nice spin to her own wounded vanity.

"Reindeer Monologues" certainly is a thought-provoking satire, as it's billed, but mostly it's a darkly funny and provocative comedy that mocks gender and sexual politics with unrestrained pleasure.

It's a typical Santa Cruz approach to the holiday season — so see it at your own risk. But it's definitely not a Bambi story, so don't take your kids. When Pisces Moon decides to debunk Santa Claus, they don't fool around. Or, rather, they do.

If You Go

WHAT: 'The Eight: Reindeer Monologues.'

WHERE: Broadway Playhouse, Santa Cruz Art League, 526 Broadway, Santa Cruz.

WHEN: Through Dec. 21, with performances at 8 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday.

TICKETS: \$15, adults only.

DETAILS: 429-2339.

Review from the Register-Pajaronian

Eight bawdy reindeers strut their stuff in Pisces Moon's 'The Eight: Reindeer Monologues'

Dec 19 2003 12:00AM

By JOYCE D. MANN

FOR THE REGISTER PAJARONIAN

Jeff Goode's iconoclastic "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues" takes a pot shot, or make that eight pot shots, at one of the biggest icons of all time, Santa Claus. We've all heard of rogue Santas - on film or TV, even in malls - but can any of them match the depravity of the jolly old elf as seen through the eyes of his eighth reindeer?

The sexy Vixen (Becky Armor) has accused Santa of the worst kind of sexual harassment. Of course, he denies the charge and the other seven reindeer are forced to take sides. Each tells his/her side of the story in a darkly comic monologue.

This is not your Norman Rockwell view of Christmas. We see the dark side of the North Pole enterprises, with elf and reindeer abuse, molestation, pedophilia and, to top it all, hazardous working conditions. The shrewish Mrs. Claus is often drunk, and abuses everyone in her purview, including Santa himself. We also find out the real truth about Rudolph. Then, as if Santa hasn't got enough trouble, some of the reindeer are planning to strike on Christmas Eve.

The No. 1 reindeer, blue-collar Dasher (Daniel David Doane) sets the scene. As expected, he puts a macho spin on the events. Cupid (Christopher Sugarman), the openly homosexual reindeer, gives quite a different perspective. Cupid has some of the funniest and most sexually suggestive lines in the play, and that's saying something.

The hedonistic Prancer, a.k.a. Hollywood (Nathaniel Meek), is still smarting about Rudolph, who upstaged him in his Hollywood debut. The feminist Blitzen (Manirose Raley) is what you might call your "Gothic" reindeer. She sides with Vixen and refers to Santa as "the jolly fat pervert."

Linda Turner is Comet, the deer whom Santa rescued from a life of crime and drugs. She is the only advocate for the old rogue. Dancer (Terri Steinmann), a ditzzy blonde former dancer (what else?) refuses to go on strike, claiming that she really needs the job.

Then Rudolph's father, Donner (Randy Birch), steps forward and tells us the sad story of his badly disabled son, who in his youth was molested by Santa and is even now languishing in a padded cell. Finally, Vixen, the source of this latest scandal, tells her side of the story. She is clearly a promiscuous reindeer, but you can't blame the victim. She knows her days as one of Santa's reindeer are numbered and plans to retire to Florida.

Co-directors Terri Steinmann and Christopher Sugarman have assembled a stellar cast for this extravaganza, all of whom give exceptional performances in nicely contrasting roles. I was especially impressed with Turner's comedic skills in the role of Comet and Sugarman's really naughty Cupid.

At the end of the evening, we're not really sure whether Santa is a depraved monster, or merely the kindly old "touchy-feely" philanthropist we always thought he was. But it's always the same with this kind of accusation and Santa does not have a chance to give his rebuttal.

Goode has found a very clever way to deal with what is at times outrageous material. He raises real and controversial issues and presents them in a palatable and most humorous way through the mouths of eight quirky reindeer. While the play may not be

everyone's cup of tea, it is very entertaining and thought provoking, and it does make a complete change from more traditional Christmas fare.

"The Eight: Reindeer Monologues" runs Thursday through Sunday until December 21st, at the Broadway Playhouse in the Santa Cruz Art League. For curtain times and for tickets, call (831) 429-2339. Pisces Moon recommends this production for adults only.

Preview from The Good Times Entertainment Weekly

The Eight: Reindeer Monologues

11-14 & 18-21 | thurs-sun

The Broadway Playhouse

When: 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays 8 p.m., 3 p.m. Sundays. Where: 526 Broadway, Santa Cruz.
Cost: \$12. Info: 429-2328.

A strange looking white man with a worldwide recognizable face has been naughty this Christmas season. And this time it's not Michael Jackson. It's Jolly Old Saint Nick, whose reputation is being smeared by his reindeer—you remember them: Dasher, Donner, Dancer, someone with a red nose and a few others. They're out to prove that the big S isn't so charming. In fact, the reindeer propose that Mr. Claus has sexually harassed Vixen. (The nerve!) Each of her flying friends has a story to tell, some support her; others support the bearded one. All will share their versions of the sexual harassment charges onstage when Pisces Moon Productions presents its dark comedy holiday show, "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues." This is a far cry from any gushy, spiritual Christmas show. In consistent Pisces Moon fashion, the company shakes up the unshakeable, sparks controversy and makes its audience walk away, talking. "None of our shows are without statements to make about the media, tradition and how far people will go to protect ideologies instead of people," says co-director/co-producer Christopher Sugarman, who also stars in the part of Cupid, one of Vixen's few allies, an openly gay reindeer that has some "issues" with the Clauses. "It's a good time to poke fun at the institution we call Christmas," Sugarman adds. The show works like this: Each reindeer speaks out in the form of a monologue, think "The Laramie Project" style of performance. The accused, Mr. Claus, stays at the North Pole for this one—he doesn't even make an appearance. But a handful of familiar acting faces do make appearances: Becky Armor, Randy Birch, Daniel David Doane, Manirose Raley, Terri Steinmann, Christopher Sugarman. "We want people to laugh and enjoy themselves," says co-director Steinmann who also plays the part of Dancer. "We want them to be provoked and challenged." | Christa Martin

Full text of preview from Santa Cruz Sentinel

December 11, 2003

Troupe gives Santa's help nasty spin

If You Go

WHAT: Jeff Goode's 'The Eight: Reindeer Monologues' presented by Pisces Moon Productions.

WHERE: Broadway Playhouse, 526 Broadway (at Ocean), Santa Cruz.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 6 p.m. Sunday. Also, 8 p.m. Dec. 18; 8 and 10 p.m. Dec. 19 and 20; 3 and 6 p.m. Dec. 21.

TICKETS: \$15. Adults only.

DETAILS: 429-2339 or www.piscesmoon.org.

By WALLACE BAINE

Sentinel staff writer

Pity the defenders of the sanctified image of Santa Claus.

First, there was the wickedly funny "Bad Santa" that may forever sully the reputation of department-store Santas everywhere.

Now, there's "The Eight: Reindeer Monologues."

Jeff Goode's viciously dark satire is the latest presentation by Santa Cruz's Pisces Moon Productions, and if you are looking for a nice holiday diversion for the kids, look elsewhere.

"I am the queen of children's theater," said the play's co-director Terri Steinmann who has worked for 15 years staging kid-oriented production. "So, believe me when I tell you, this is not for children."

It's not for a lot of adults either, that is, those adults who cannot stomach irreverent or rude treatment of December's favorite fat man. And, if you get all teary every time you hear "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer," you won't only be offended, you're likely to stay offended till next Christmas.

"'Bad Santa' could not have come out at a better time," said Steinmann of her play's skewed, cynical appeal. "We like to call this the little cult play that could."

"The Eight" brings the ugly political freak-show of contemporary American life to Santa's village. The peace of Santa's little fiefdom is disrupted by Vixen, one of the eight, who publicly accuses old Saint Nick of sexual harassment. This salacious revelation lets loose the bottled-up malicious rumors and rationalizations among the original "Eight" — and Rudolph, not one of them, is ostracized by this bunch and even dubbed by one as "that claymation piece of crap."

Vixen's declaration also leads to more of the same: Labor exploitation in Toyland, elf abuse, jolly old megalomania. Blitzen is introduced as a feminist rabble-rouser; Comet as Santa's blindly loyal devotee; Cupid as a flaming, over-the-top gossip.

"It not only has to do with the men/women dynamic, but political issues as well, particularly the liberal/conservative divide," said Steinmann. "It really allows us to have a play about a lot of meaningful issues without a lot of heavy melodrama."

"The Eight," said Steinmann, "brings Pisces Moon back to its roots, devilishly dark satire.

"We even satirize ourselves sometimes," she said. "In this play, we're all wearing black on a bare stage. Sound familiar? Of course, this time we're all wearing antlers."

Steinmann said she is ready to turn people away who happen to bring children along. She calls the play a "hard R" rating, thanks mostly to risqué and crude language and sexual references. When she saw the play staged, she was struck by the strong reactions: Everyone was either laughing out loud or walking out.

"This is kind of a deliberate attempt to escape some of the trappings of Christmas," she said. "Believe me, this thing is a political heyday. It's an hour and 20 minutes of slaying sacred cows."