B3

A unique and relevant play opens at Town Hall Theatre

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By Sophie Braccini



From left: Suzie Shepard and Erin Gould in "Woman in Mind"

Photos Jay Yamada

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POUR SMILE IS EVERYTH

1980s play that tells the story of a frustrated housewife who finds relief from her dull and emotionally deprived existence in a fantasy world where she has inlife of its own, and will finally subruns through March 24 at Town point of her folly. Hall Theatre, provides spectators and humor on the dark backdrop

contemporary British playwright ral exuberance to the role and adds Alan Ayckbourn, known for writing many plays about marriages and also for experimenting with different forms on the stage, "Woman in Mind" has the particularity of being written entirely from the perspective of Susan, the housewife. Dennis Markam, who directs the play at Town Hall, says that this is one of the reasons he wanted to present this work in Lafayette; he believes it is the only play of its kind.

The play takes place in Susan's garden – very lovely scenic design, in her presence only, and we see boring and insensitive husband what she thinks. There is no explanation, no commentary about what quality. Domonic Tracy as Susan's is happening to her; the audience son has a smaller role but adds his has to figure it out. This is where touch of lack of compassion to knowing where the play is going, Susan's deadly paradigm. The ficin fact, helps in appreciating it.

frustrated housewife who uses benign and rosy, soap opera-like daydreaming to compensate for the lack of emotional fulfillment she fantasy takes control of her reality, and she tips into madness.

The way Susan loses ground, unable to control her daydreaming, becoming controlled by it, transitions very slowly, but with great mastery.

There are Freudian accents to the play. Susan is frustrated emo-

oman In Mind" is a deprived. When she confronts her cold and boring clergyman of a husband on the topic he answers that he thought that after a certain age, meaning menopause, women just lose interest. Her fantasy with vented a parallel family that has a her dreamed-husband takes on a very erotic turn - "sleeping with merge her sanity. The play, which the devil" – just before the tipping

While the subject of the play with many moments of lightness is dramatic, spectators laugh constantly. The group of actors that of a mental breakdown. It is served were selected to embody the charup by a remarkable group of ac- acters holds the success of the play. They are all excellent. Suzie Written in 1985 by prominent Shepard as Susan brings her natuall the nuances of despair and anger that it demands. She is on stage from the first minute to the last, in her average dress and sad sweater, a powerful presence.

All the actors revolving around her are perfectly cast. Erin Gould embodies the funny, touching and clumsy doctor, who brings a touch of real humanity into Susan's life. Gretchen Lee Salter is the annoying live-in sister-in-law. She brings the annoyance to an almost palpable level and adds some surprises at the end. Michael Sally plays the perfectly, giving him no redeeming tional family of Craig Souza, Tim It all starts as the story of a Holt Jones and Brooke Silva, with their shallow soap lives and colorful attire, become increasingly and

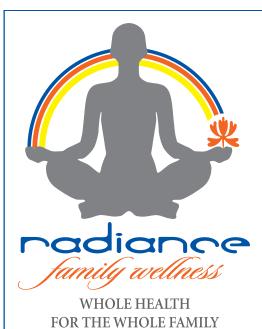
tactfully menacing. The play does not hit too far gets in her real life. But slowly, the from home. Susan's mental imagery and the way it takes control of her life could be a metaphor for today's prescription pill epidemic among mothers reported in Parents

Magazine or The Washington Post. "Woman In Mind" plays at THT until March 24. For more information and tickets go to www. townhalltheatre.com/woman-in-



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