

THEATRE

Priscilla Walker, Bill Reid shine in musical

Review by Deborah McGee

Gold Dust

The scene: Seymour's Greenery Restaurant. Downtown Eugene. 9 pm Friday.

Opening night—for *Gold Dust*. Producer Jim Roberts sits upright with his personable smile at the gate. A saloon girl in a red outfit teases her way around the audience. Director Melina Neal sits unobtrusively mid-audience. After a string of hits, everyone in the room is wondering if the repertory group can pull it off again.

John Duncan (*Register-Guard* theater reviewer) and I sit back-to-back at small tables near the stage. A guy with a beret and loud French voice is badgering customers at level two tables. He's extremely loud. One can't help but note him. It's... it's Matt Bonham! Yes, the one who played the president in *Rap Master Ronnie*. The show has begun, and it was quite a show all over the place that night.

Denny Guehler was in the audience and registered one-and-a-half loud rumbles. Becky Crosen-LaChapelle (*Nunsense*) also had opening night seats, and laughed her unmistakable ripple throughout. At play's end, cast members delivered flowers to their shy director, in a gesture unusual in the theater world.

Back to the on-stage scene. Bill Reid was wonderful as Jebediah Harp, the papa to two kids hankering for certain members of the opposite sex. Papa likes the looks of the one his son wants—for himself. With a twang as thick as a bass fiddle string, and a total wallowing in the delights of such words as "awful," "galoot," and "t-r-r-embles," *Gold Dust* whips out a fine evening's entertainment. It's the story of lovers' quarrels in Rowdy River, Colorado, during gold mining days.

That Bill Reid, now. He was remarkable last winter in Zircon Theater's *Waiting for Godot*. *Gold Dust* shows that he can sing and dance as well as act. He has a fascinating rubber-man quality to his body and face, and was most

enjoyable to experience.

Priscilla Walker, though, carried away the show. It's a rare matching of person with persona and Walker really shines as Diamond Lil, cunning hussy with a voice that gets to take it all the way with her many fine numbers. She's all sass and brass and sweet little dumplin' pie. Seeing Reid and Walker alone is worth the ticket price. Add to that some mighty fine performances by the rest of the company (nine others, including Roger Emmert, Eric Hadley, Dei Olson) and it's one terrific bargain, to boot.

Many rounds of applause go to Fiddlin' Big Sue, a local musician and costumer. She has Uncle T and Johnny with her, too, and I swear the floorboards beneath them in a few numbers gave way six inches. Honest. Sue does some great goofy hoofin' that fits right into the show, does the part of a male character named Cooky with downright downhome silliness, and joins her two cohorts in a wonderful bluegrass/country medley that starts the show off after intermission. Johnny Schiller of the group performs the role of Spinner, a sort of narrator, with easy confidence. Uncle T picked off some amazing banjo tunes.

Walker's vocal numbers thrill the most, but a second close are the six pieces done by the group of 11 players as a whole. It was obvious that Richard Gray has a knack for musical direction. When the group sang "Rowdy River," all 11 voices blended especially pleasurably at the tune's refrain.

While *Gold Dust* does not have the political bite I so enjoyed in Mainstage Cabaret's other productions like *Rap Master Ronnie* and *Tomfoolery*, it's an excellent choice for summer musical theater in Eugene. Its six-week run has started on a high note, and the superb professionalism already at work will ensure an even finer production. If you think you've seen all that can be done with the flavor called Western, you just might give it another try with Mainstage's production of *Gold Dust*.

LITERARY ARTS

Jurors chosen for 1987 Lane Literary Awards

The First Annual Lane Literary Awards, sponsored by Lane Literary Guild, Lane Regional Arts Council, and *What's Happening* is proud to announce John Varley and Judy Grahn as jurors and the featured readers at the Lane Literary Guild's Eugene Celebration Reading.

John Varley is considered to be one of the most outstanding science fiction writers of this time. He grew up in Texas and has lived in Eugene for the last 11 years. He is the author of the best selling trilogy beginning with *Titan*, then *Wizard*, and finishing with *Demon*, and *The Ophiuchi Hotline*, *The Barbie Murders*, *Blue Champagne*, and *The Persistence of Vision* which won both the 1978 Hugo and the 1978 Novella.

Mr. Varley's work has been translated into several different languages and is read internationally. His short stories are published in numerous magazines and collections such as *The Best Science Fiction of the Year #8*, *The 1978 Annual World's Best Science Fiction*, *Isaac Asimov's Master of Science Fiction*, *The Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *22nd Series*, *Nebula Winners Twelve*, *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, *Galaxy Science Fiction* and *Fiction*.

Some of his numerous short stories include "Air Raid," "Bagatelle," "The Black Hole Passes," "A Choice of Enemies," "Equinoctial," "Good-bye, Robinson Crusoe," "Gotta Sing, Gotta Dance," "In the Bowl," "In the Hall of the Martian Kings," "Lollipop and the Tar Baby," "The M&M, Seen as a Low-Yield Thermonuclear Device," "Manikins," "Options," "The Persistence of Vision," "The Funhouse Effect," "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank," "The Phantom of Kansas," "Picnic on Nearsides," "Retrograde Summer," "Scorecard," "The Pusher," which won the 1982 Short Story Award, "Press Enter," which won the 1984 Novella, and "Aussie-

con," which won the 1985 Novella.

John Varley says that he has held several not too interesting jobs in his life but none for more than three months. A writer is all he ever wanted to be. He is an aquarist, likes to read, write, and travel when he can. He has been working more and more in Hollywood in the past few years and recently has been working on the screenplay for his book, *Millenium*, which is being made into a movie.

Judy Grahn is considered one of America's foremost poets and one of its most provocative voices. She lived her first nine years in Chicago, Illinois and the following nine in southern New Mexico. She received her formal education from a number of schools, and has a BA in Women's Studies from San Francisco State University. She has made herself at home on the coast of California since 1968.

In 1970 she co-founded the first all-women's press which published, printed, and distributed a variety of new women's voices including her own *Edward the Dyke*, *The Common Woman Poems*, and *A Woman Is Talking to Death*. St. Martin's Press has published a collection of her poetry through 1977, *The Work of a Common Woman* (reprinted by the Crossing Press).

Ms. Grahn has also edited two volumes of women's short stories and has taught creative writing workshops for several years at The Women's Writing Center at Cazenovia, New York, The Women's Writing Workshop at Oneida, New York, and at Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York.

She has also taught courses at Stanford University and New College of California. She is currently teaching women's writing, poetry, literature, and Gay and Lesbian studies classes in the Bay Area. A dynamic and popular reader, she does about 40 readings a year throughout the United States.



Award winning poet Judy Grahn

Her most recent books are *The Queen of Wands* (The Crossing Press), and a major nonfiction work, *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds* (Beacon); also, *The Highest Apple*, *Sappho and the Lesbian Poetic Tradition* (Spinners Ink). She has just finished a verse play, *The Queen of Swords*, for Beacon Press to be released October, 1987.

In 1979 Judy Grahn received an award for Poem of the Year from American Poetry Review, in 1980 she was given a National Endowment Individual Grant for Creative Writing, and in 1983 she won an American Book Award from Before Columbus Foundation. The American Library Association declared *Another Mother Tongue* its Gay Book of the Year in 1985, and that same year she was honored in a "Women of Words" luncheon in San Francisco, along with Alice Walker, Tillie Olsen and three other women writers. Her work has been translated or reproduced in English in 10 countries and is widely anthologized, including in *The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women*.

Announcing the 1987 Lane Literary Awards

The First Annual Lane Literary Awards, sponsored by Lane Literary Guild, Lane Regional Arts Council and *What's Happening*, is now accepting previously unpublished short fiction and poetry from writers residing in Lane County.

Works by selected writers will be included in *Pacifica*, a special literary supplement, to be published in the September 17 issue of *What's Happening*.

The two award winners in each category will be invited to read as part of Lane Literary Guild's Eugene Celebration Reading, at the Hult Center on September 27.

Each award winner will also receive \$50.

Jurors for the Awards will be the featured guest readers at the Eugene Celebration Reading. They are poet Judy Grahn and science fiction writer John Varley.

- Writers must reside in Lane County, Oregon.
- Writers may submit either poetry or fiction, but not both.
- All submissions must be typed: fiction (double-spaced) not to exceed 1500 words; poetry not to exceed 5 poems or 300 lines.
- Two copies of each work are required, without the author's name on them.
- One separate cover sheet should list the writer's name, address, and title of each work submitted.
- Work samples will not be returned.
- A \$3 reader's fee for each writer must accompany the submission. Make checks payable to Lane Literary Guild.
- Entries should be mailed to: Lane Literary Awards, Lane Regional Arts Council, 411 High St., Eugene, OR 97401.
- Deadline for receipt of entries: 4 pm, July 9, 1987.
- Entrants will be notified by mail of the jurors' decision by August 15.

Invest in your principles.

Socially Responsible Investing

We invest in companies which are making a positive impact on the world through their products, services and business ethics. We avoid investments in South Africa, weapons manufacturing or nuclear energy.

We invite you to contact us right away for a brochure or to schedule a meeting at no charge. There is no minimum investment.



Progressive Securities Investment Services

Portland Office 503.224.7828
Eugene Office 503.341.3834
P.O. Box 3860
Eugene, Oregon 97403

MONSTER COOKIE CO.

We're more than just a cookie store!

Stop by Monster Cookie Company to enjoy:



ICED

- coffees
- espressos
- cappuccinos
- chokolatinos
- cafe au lait

Ice cream cones & shakes
Sandwiches & Bagels

5th & Willamette 687-1064