

Mac Wellman's Dracula

Phoenix II Theatre, 414 Mason; 731-6027, www.ticketweb.com. \$15.

Thurs-Sat, 8pm. Through March 1, 2002

From the Bay Guardian:

La Vache Enragée presents Mac Wellman's witty, wild, word-drunk take on the Bram Stoker classic. Adding its own twist, La Vache makes Dracula (Jennifer Dean) a steely Transylvanian countess with porcelain features and a striking red gown. A commanding presence, Dean's cold-blooded mistress, backed by an instrument-toting band of sultry vampirettes, seduces the innocent Lucy (Katherine Basbaum) despite the best intentions of guardian Mina (Katherine Murphy) and artless American beau Quincy (Myers Clark), not to mention the professional concern of Professor Von Helsing (AJ Davenport) or the less-than-professional Dr. Seward (Vonn Scott Bair). Meanwhile, Mina's husband, Jonathan (Scott Fluhrer), raves under Dracula's spell in Seward's asylum, where happy-go-lucky factotum Simmons (Jon Bailey in a red-blooded performance) sings bawdy sea chanteys. Stoker's latent themes of sex and power erupt here in a full-blown gale of audacious syntax and lurid poetry as the characters look to gratify themselves wherever possible. The pace flags a bit, and the word-driven text receives inconsistent treatment from an uneven cast, but director Mike Burg's imaginative staging and rich, elegant costumes combine with Ty McKenzie's sepulchral lighting to create an alluringly haunted environment for Wellman's "bloodsucking mysterium." (Avila)