

VANITIES

Full-length play

Cast 3 women

A bittersweet comedy that is an astute, snapshot sharp chronicle of the lives of three Texas girls. In 1963, Joanne, Kathy and Mary are aggressively vivacious cheerleaders. Five years later in their college sorority house, they are confronting their futures with nervous jauntiness. In 1974, they reunite briefly in New York. Their lives have diverged their friendship, which once thrived on assumption as well coordinated as sweater sets, is strained and ambiguous. Old time banter rings false. Their attempts at honest conversation only show they can no longer afford to have very much in common.

"Unnervingly funny...Fast moving, sneakily stinging dialogue." - *Newsweek*

"Uncommonly attractive." - *New York Magazine*

Published by Samuel French, Inc.

PATIO/PORCH

Two related one-act plays

Cast 2 women

The first play, PATIO, is set in the backyard of a middle-class Texas home. Pearl, the younger sister, is preparing a going-away party for her older sister, Jewel, a beautician who is bored with small-town life and is heading off hopefully to the big city. As the two bustle about setting out food and putting up decorations, their conversation reveals progressively more and more of their differences and dreams—and of the emptiness that has pervaded both their lives. (2 women.)

In PORCH, the two characters are an ill and crotchety old woman and her restless spinster daughter. As they sit on their ramshackle front porch, complaining of the heat, the meanness of the mother and the aching frustration of the daughter are made vivid through dialogue that, while frequently funny, is also unerring in capturing the quiet desperation that besets them both. (2 women.)

Offering tour de force roles for actresses, this pair of two-character plays provides contrasting, but equally incisive, studies of life in small-town Texas. While the Broadway production featured the same actresses in both plays, the roles can just as easily be divided among four performers. And the two plays, while fitting together smoothly as a double bill, may also be presented individually with equal effectiveness.

"If you loved Vanities, you'll love PATIO/PORCH." — *NY Daily News*.

"Heifner provides juicy character parts for women." — *Village Voice*.

Published by Dramatists Play Service

NATURAL DISASTERS

Two one-act plays

Cast: 2 women/1 man and 1 woman

TROPICAL DEPRESSION. In a slightly seedy resort hotel on a remote Caribbean island, two high-living Texas housewives, Gloria and Janine, are enjoying a respite from their rich but boring husbands. They are determined to savor their holiday to the fullest, but nature has other plans. First they get burned to a crisp by the tropical sun, then a hurricane imprisons them in their tacky room. In between, however, Gloria defiantly spends a great deal of her absent husband's money on various "art treasures," while Janine (a former Miss Texas) pays for the favors of a handsome lifeguard, an act which jolts them both back to reality and makes them reexamine just who they are and what they really want from life. (2 women.)

In the second play, **TWISTER**, Betty and Roy are apparently the only survivors of a tornado that has destroyed their tiny Texas town and all their worldly goods. After the initial shock wears off Roy sets about trying to restore things to what they were, while Betty, suddenly freed from all the junk she owned, wants to move on and start over. The resulting debate is both hilarious and revealing, as Roy resists the notion that what they had was nothing great while Betty pours out all her hopes and frustrations that have been bottled up for years. In the end it is the dream that triumphs: Betty charges off to catch a bus that may never arrive, and Roy attempts to hold onto the present that is fast becoming the past. (1 man, 1 woman.)

Presented Off-Off-Broadway, in New York City, these highly inventive and very funny short plays with two "natural disasters"—a hurricane and a tornado and the sometimes poignant, sometimes hilarious effects they have on their victims. While designed to make up an evening by themselves, the plays also complete the group of four related one-act works of which PATIO and PORCH are the other components.

Published by Dramatists Play Service

RUNNING ON EMPTY

Full-length Play

Cast: 3 men/2 women

As the play begins, Lilly is pondering which of her designer dresses to burn in the fireplace of her chic if sparsely furnished penthouse apartment. The problem is that it is wintertime, the United States has long since used up its fuel reserves, and if Lilly and her husband, Stephen, are to keep warm there is no alternative. Down in the streets below people are fighting birds for berries, cutting down trees in the parks for fuel, and waiting in endless lines for meager government food handouts. Lilly and Stephen are also preparing for a party, albeit one in which both food and drink will be imagined rather than real. The guest of honor is to be their old friend, David, with whom both once had romantic involvement.

When David arrives he is accompanied by his latest conquests, Chloe (a flower child) and Jonathan (a committed Catholic), who, like their predecessors, are competing for David's amoral favors. As the pretend party progresses the antic mood of the play grows increasingly more probing and serious, as questions are raised about the barren platonic relationship which Lilly and Stephen have settled for; David's continued failure to commit himself, sexually or otherwise; and Chloe and Jonathan's obsession with the evils of materialism (her) and gnawing personal guilt (him).

In the end hopes are raised that the bitter lessons of the past, and present, will somehow be heeded, and that mankind may yet bring some semblance of order to the chaos and misfortune which his baser instincts have engendered.

A chilling yet, at the same time, very funny view of our possible future—when greed, conspicuous consumption and human willfulness have, at last, plundered the planet and reduced the circumstances of human life to a subsistence level. While set in New York City the play text allows for the substitution of local place names to underscore its provocative message that this can happen anywhere—and will—unless we reverse our present course.

"Heifner has created a sort of bird's eye view of such complexities as the conservation of natural resources, the politics of humanity, the value (if any) of various sexual roles and the necessity of proper dress during catastrophe...It is incredibly enjoyable." —TWT (Houston).

"...Heifner's view of a world winding down with a whimper rather than a bang is full of ideas, humor and feeling." —Houston Chronicle.

Published by Dramatists Play Service

BARGAINS

Full-length Play

Cast: 2 men/3 women

At the beginning of BARGAINS, the female clerks in the local discount store are preparing for a mid-summer sale and gossiping over marked-down goods that nobody wants. Sally, prim and conservative, still lives with her tyrannical mother. Mildred, brassy and funny, lives in a trailer with her brother, Lothar, a failed hairdresser who has never found himself. When the department store closes, the world as these women know it comes to an end.

Although opposites in all respects, Sally and Mildred become allies and then friends as they rearrange the people who encumber their lives. After much maneuvering with the semi-suicidal Lothar, Mildred sends him off in the trailer to make a new start in California with his lover Dennis, a florist who is allergic to flowers. Sally confronts her domineering mother for the first time in her life and decides to let Mildred come to live in their house. Having inherited Dennis' flower shop, the two friends begin new careers, a new business and new lives.

A delightful new comedy about working women in a small Texas town. There, Sally and Mildred, lose their jobs but manage to recapture their lives.

"Jack Heifner's new female-bonding comedy about department store workers in a small Texas town is...funny...touching..." —Variety.

Published by Dramatists Play Service.

HOME FIRES

Full-length Play

Cast: 1 man/7 women

One of only three plays nominated for Best Play of the Year in 1997 by the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, Home Fires is the story of a Texas woman trying to raise her three teenage children during hard times in World War II. After Nettie's husband leaves her, she is forced to take in female boarders to make ends meet. The house is crowded and the eccentric women who stay there are entertaining, lost souls looking for husbands and careers in a world without men.

The play examines family, home, honor and dreams during a time when everyone had to "make do or do without." Sonny, the teenage son, is afraid to go off to war. When Maggie, a sexy new boarder, opens his eyes to his musical talents and his sexuality, Sonny fights with his mother and runs away, thus evading his draft notice. As the play moves through five years, all the characters face many obstacles, not the least of which is keeping their faith in spite of severe disappointments. Eventually, Sonny returns home to see his mother for one last time and to give her a lasting gift to remember him by.

"It's a show with all the poignance, wistfulness and warmth of a favorite '40s ballad."
(Back Stage West).

"Heifner's strong suits, naturalistic dialogue and a keen insight into women's psyches, are admirably served." (Los Angeles Times).

Published by Dramatic Publishing.

BOYS' PLAY

One-act play

Cast: 2 men

This is the story of two teenage friends who, while spending the night camping beside a lake, make a decision that will change their lives forever. Tom is a popular ex-football player who is flunking out of school and sees no hope for the future. Joe is an awkward, sheltered kid who has a true case of hero worship where Tom is concerned. As the evening progresses from fun and games into seriousness, Tom reveals he has developed his own religion based on some strange lights he sees coming from across the lake. Through talk of sex, school, sports, families and the telling of ghost stories, Tom tests Joe's allegiance to him and eventually asks Joe to help him leave his current life behind. This play examines teenage friendship, sexuality and teen suicide.

The world premiere of Boys' Play took place at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre, where it was part of the "Youth at Risk" program. The play later won two Los Angeles Dramalogue Awards.

Published by Dramatic Publishing

COMFORT AND JOY

Full-length play

Cast: 4 men/2 women

Comfort and Joy takes place during the Christmas season in a house in the Hollywood Hills. Scott and Tony are a happily married couple in the middle of a holiday disaster. Scott's recently widowed, demanding mother arrives from Texas convinced that her son is really straight. Tony's brother (who has been thrown out of his own house by his wife) is camped out on the sofa threatening suicide. Finally, Tony's sister unexpectedly arrives from South America in a very pregnant condition.

Chaos is the order of the day. Into this holiday whirlwind descends an unusual fairy who teaches the families about love, hope and forgiveness. The fairy plays with time—sending the characters into their pasts to face the reasons for their current problems. Inventive and hilarious, this is a fast-moving, funny, touching play.

Published by Dramatic Publishing

HEARTBREAK

Full-length Play

Cast: 2 men/2 women

Heartbreak is an unusual comedy/drama about betrayal and forgiveness. Before his death, Jason penned a "tell all" novel about his lover and best friends. When the book was published, everyone was shocked and furious to read the way their relationships had been presented. In the play, as the group gathers for Jason's memorial service, they examine the stories from the book compared to the way the events happened in real life. The innovative structure of this play takes the characters on a roller coaster ride in search of the truth and on a funny/sad journey into the meaning of love and friendship.

Winner of 5 Los Angeles Dramalogue Awards including Best Play.

Published by Dramatic Publishing.

AMERICAN BEAUTY

Full-length Musical
with composer Michael Rice and other writers

Cast: 7 women

American Beauty spoofs beauty contests...but, first and last, it values the human beings who participate in them. The effect is lump-in-the-throat stunning. "This show is a delight" (Richmond News Leader).

This wonderfully entertaining musical dramatizes the hopes of seven women as they pursue their dreams of winning the Miss Delta Queen Beauty Pageant. The first act focuses on key events leading up to the last night of competition, while the second act sweeps us from the contestants' opening parade to the final moment of coronation. The talent competition featuring a montage of country, pop and operatic singers, a marimba player, a tap dancer, a twirler and an ill-performed dramatic monologue, is hilarious.

Through a medley of serious and satiric monologues and scenes, American Beauty also introduces us to an array of secondary characters including backstage mothers, pageant judges, commercial sponsors, and flamboyant choreographers. In a satisfying plot twist at the end of the show, the audience discovers that each of the contestants was crowned "Miss Delta Queen" in competitions ranging from the present to the past. Songs include: "I'm in a Pageant!," "Pageant Mothers and Daughters," "Something's Gonna Happen" and "Fireflies and Shooting Stars." American Beauty captures all the anxiety, the fear and the elation involved in competition, while underscoring each contestant's courage and determination.

"American Beauty has a big heart" (Richmond Times).

Published by Dramatic Publishing.

LEADER OF THE PACK

Full Length Musical, Comedy

Cast: 4 men, 10 women

Music and Lyrics by Ellie Greenwich and friends

Liner notes by Anne Beatts

Additional material by Jack Heifner

Based on an original concept by Melanie Mintz

NOMINEE! 1985 TONY AWARD FOR BEST MUSICAL

This hit Broadway musical retrospective celebrates the life and times of Ellie Greenwich, whose doo wop sounds skyrocketed to the top of the sixties charts. The story of Ellie's rise to fame and fortune is punctuated with the virtual Hit Parade of her music: "**Chapel of Love**," "**Da Do Ron Ron**," "**Be My Baby**," "**Hanky Panky**," "**Do Wah Diddy**," "**And Then He Kissed Me**" and, of course, the title song "**Leader of the Pack**."

"*Leader of the Pack* was the first modern Broadway musical of its kind to tell the story of a real person through their songs [the singular Ellie Greenwich] — a precursor to *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* before the [jukebox musical] genre was popular or well-worn." – *Playbill*

"A happy, high spirited, foot stomping romp. I never realized the songs of the sixties could sound so good." - *WNBC Radio*

"The show dances with that up tempo 'wall of sound' that was part of all our lives." - *Hollywood Reporter*

"Superior, consistently ingratiating entertainment." - *Variety*

Leader of the Pack opened on Broadway at the Ambassador Theatre on April 8, 1985. It was directed by Michael Peters.

Published by Samuel French, Inc.

VANITIES – THE MUSICAL with David Kirshenbaum

Full-length musical

Cast: 3 women

Vanities: The Musical chronicles the life-affirming journey of three vivacious Texas teens from cheerleaders to sorority sisters to housewives, liberated women and beyond. This musical captures a snapshot-sharp portrait of the lives, loves, disappointments and dreams of these young women growing up during the turbulent '60s and '70s and reconnecting in the late 1980s.

With a tunefully evocative score by David Kirshenbaum (Summer of '42) and Jack Heifner's hilarious adaptation of his long-running off-Broadway smash, *Vanities: The Musical* is a funny and poignant look at three best friends who discover that, through thirty years of rapidly changing times, the one thing they can rely on is each other.

"May well outshine the three-decade prominence of Jack Heifner's original!" - *Variety* (Bob Verini)

"[Has] satirical teeth and poignancy in its observation of dreams turned sour and bonds broken." – *Variety* (David Rooney)

"Irresistibly winning!" – *L.A. Times*

"An enjoyable new musical with an eclectic pop score!" - *TheaterMania.com*

"[A] three-way portrait of American womanhood... both satirical and uplifting." – *The Seattle Times*

"Riffs on girl-group music of the early '60s and [pays] homage to some of the more mellow sounds of a decade later" – *Associated Press*

"[A] sympathetic, seriocomic portrait of cheerleaders who grow up and grow apart... Take your mother or grandmother!" – NY1

Vanities: The Musical premiered Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theater on July 16, 2009 in New York City. It was directed by Judith Ivey.

Published by Samuel French, Inc.