**ARTS**

**Sassy, spirited ‘Cinderella’**

By Cathy Rowman
Special to The S.F. Examiner

The African-American Shakespeare Company’s annual production of “Cinderella” is back — full of glittering, glorious wonder for holiday audiences of all ages.

Parents whose daughters have memorized Disney’s version should take time to see this production, and soon. This Cinderella is a scullery maid who knows her own mind. She’s excited about the ball, but not because she’s got her eye on the throne.

“I’ve come to meet my very own prince — whether his father is king or not,” she declares.

There are five shows between now and Dec. 22 at the Buriel Clay Theater in San Francisco. The production is directed by L. Peter Callen and, artistic director for the company.

It’s a strong cast, but the show stealer are the evil Stepmother, played by Claire McDaniel, and her daughters Zemira and Shunique, played by Twon Marcel and B. Chico Padlin, respectively.

**REVIEWS**

**Cinderella**

*Where:* Buriel Clay Theater, African-American Shakespeare Company, 762 Fulton St., S.F.

*When:* 8 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday and Dec. 22 and 3 and 8 p.m. Dec. 23

*Tickets:* $25 to $75


Kimile Stingly and Derick Weatherboy are Cinderella and Prince Charming in African-American Shakespeare Company’s holiday production of “Cinderella.”

McDaniel, whose voice and presence brings to mind Shirley Bassey, is deliciously evil. When she helps out “I’m a bad mama,” it’s clear she means it.

Marcel and Padlin are very funny guys. Strapped into their party dresses and slathered with rouge, they play the stepbrother to the hilt. When the Duke arrives at their home looking for the maiden whose foot fits the slipper, Shunique brushes her sister away: “Don’t even try.” She thunders, “I got this.”

Rounding out the cast is Kimile Stingly, who shines as Cinderella. It’s a hit, disappointing that her transformation from maid to demure princess might not be enough to save the audience from a repeat of the same old story.

What more could a princess want?

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**‘Queen of Knives’ taps Gaiman for magical inspiration**

By Lauren Gallagher
S.F. Examiner Staff Writer

Magic tricks are made for the stage, but with the exception of David Copperfield in “Hit-Tracker” productions, slight of hand is rarely paired with dance.

San Francisco dance troupe Sharp & Fine is poised to set a precedent with the world premiere of the evening-length “Queen of Knives,” debuting at Z Space on Thursday.

“I really, really like magic shows,” says dancer-choreographer Megan Karashe, who, with her sister Shannon Karashe, heads the troupe.

The work is based on British author Neil Gaiman’s story the poem of the same name. It’s a dark, intense tale about a pair of grandparents, their grandchild, a magic show, love and its consequences.

“I’ve tried the poem since I first read it,” Megan says. “It has amazing ways of talking about love and the things you can be really afraid of, and really want, in love, but through this crazy story about magic shows.”

Gaiman, who gave the Karashe’s permission to use his work, only had one stipulation about a contemporary dance staging of his poem: a woman had to get into a hot costume and disappear.

To devise “Queen of Knives,” Sharp & Fine — in this production, seven dancers — researched local dance troupes Sharp & Fine adopts Neil Gaiman’s poem “Queen of Knives” for the stage.

**IF YOU GO**

**Queen of Knives**

Presented by Sharp & Fine

*Where:* Z Space, 450 Florida St., S.F.

*When:* 8 p.m. Thursday—Saturday, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Sunday

*Tickets:* $25 to $30

*Contact:* (415) 811-3131, zspace.org, www.sharpandfine.com

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**EVENTS**

**THURSDAY**

**Silicon Valley Rocks:** Techies who roll deep as music fans form the roster of bands at a benefit for Music in Schools Today, a Bay Area music education nonprofit active for 30 years. 7 p.m., $25, 805 South First St., S.F. (650) 810-2005, www.events4tix.com

**Draeque en ice:** The Salisbury Holiday Ice Show’s “Draeque the Icy Vikings” showcases the city’s favorite drag queens dressed as their best “gay apparel” in a night of comedic, lip-syncing and skating. 8-10 p.m., Union Square, Powell and Geary streets, S.F. www.salisburyholidayice.com

**Jamestown Revival:** The harmonizing Americana roots band performs songs from its latest EP, “California,” 8 p.m, 89-812 Dick and Mortar Music Hall, 1001 3rd St., S.F. (415) 452-4078, www.jamestownrevival.com

**FRIDAY**

**Warhol pop up:** Global auction house Christie’s presents “Warhol: An Andy Warhol pop-up shop selling holiday-themed Warhol art, including several one-of-a-kind silkscreen prints,” 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday-Sunday (open 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday), free, Mulberry, 160 Grant Ave., S.F., (888) 685-6856, www.christies.com

**SATURDAY**

**Art lecture:** Celebrating the 150th anniversary for Nacjonal Macouh Lefkowitz’s youth: music education program, features Warden, Tom Johnston, Laura Johnson, Lester Chambers, Nikita Germano and others. Suggested attire is “1800s-1940s dance era festive attire.” 6-8 p.m, (reception 5 p.m.) (luncheon, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.), 101 Throckmorton Theatre, 142 Throckmorton Ave., Mill Valley, (415) 383-0690, www.hearthrockmorton.org

**Old Time Maritime Christmas:** Visitors will experience Christmas in the year 1867, and they can meet and talk with reenactors aboard historic ships. Lamp lit guided tours leave every 20 minutes from the entrance to Hyde Street Pier, 6 to 7:40 p.m., free, reservations recommended, Hyde Street Pier, S.F., (415) 447-5000

**Crones for the Holidays — The Sequel**

Crate & Crone, aka comedians Terry Batch and Corlin Myers, present a follow-up to last year’s vendinellus holiday variety show. 8 and 9 p.m., Saturday, 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., Sundays, Dec. 22, free, Thirst Theatre, 100 2nd St., S.F., (415) 810-8100