

WHAT CRITIC'S SAY ABOUT
SPARKS

I LOVE LUCY LIVE ON STAGE

Directed, Choreographed, Adapted and Written for the Stage
By Rick Sparks

Currently Running! Greenway Court Theatre LA

“...oh, what fun it is to see what they did and a glimmer of how they did it at the Desilu Studio in 1952 as presented by Rick Sparks in *“I Love Lucy” Live on Stage* now at the Greenway Court Theatre... This is a very entertaining evening thanks to the entire cast and crew whose merry mood/antics throughout create more than ample sparks... assuredly what goes on in between the takes is as much if not more fun than the actual filming. Lucy and Ethel do go up on a line, which requires a retake, and Sparks inventively illustrates how a signature was written on a poster with a standin duplicating Lucy's hand movement. Great fun!... But once again it is Rick Sparks' vision that makes the show work on such a high level... Sparks' meticulous vision begins there and as to the rest...well, you'll just have to go and see for yourselves, now won't you? ...Yehss!

DON GRIGWARE - BROADWAY WORLD.COM

GO! If you're an I Love Lucy fan, this is your moment. The show, based on the TV series that still runs in syndication 60 years after its debut, takes audience members back to Desilu studio during the 1950s, where the audience sits in on a "live" television taping of two episodes..., director Rick Sparks' terrific cast channel them with charm, intelligence and energy in this fun-filled musical comedy... The two original episodes, "The Benefit" and "Lucy has Her Eyes Examined" (written by Jess Oppenheimer, Madelyn Pugh and Bob Carroll Jr.), are a hoot, but so are the hilarious commercial breaks, the Lucy trivia contest and the surprising variety of musical and dance numbers...”

LOVELL ESTELL - LA WEEKLY

GO!!! “...Ninety of the funnest/funniest minutes you’re likely to have all year....The brilliant brainchild of directorial whiz Rick Sparks, I Love Lucy® Live on Stage treats us to the “filming” of two authentic I Love Lucy episodes...Naturally, none of this would work without the talent on and off stage at the Greenway Playhouse beginning with the always amazing Sparks, who can move effortlessly from directing a serious piece like Daddy to a comedy like That Perfect Moment (both of which won him Best Director Scenie Awards) to the unique theatrical event that is I Love Lucy® Live on Stage, which he has not only directed but musically staged as well....In less capable hands, I Love Lucy® Live on Stage might have fizzled. Thanks to Sparks and his talented team, it sizzles—and then some. I had an absolute (Lucille) Ball! (Oops! Not allowed to say that.) “

STEVEN STANLEY - STAGE SCENE LA

“...Who loves Lucy? From the production I saw at the Greenway Court, everyone involved in “I Love Lucy Live on Stage.” Rick Sparks has staged and directed a very affectionate homage to those involved in the original ‘I Love Lucy’ sitcom... This show is a must-see for “I Love Lucy” aficionados as they will easily recognize the setups and situations of the two episodes. New fans to Lucy will just get caught up in the infectious fun of this 90-minute, intermission-less show set in a much more innocent and naïve time...”

GIL KAAN, Culture Spot LA

“...As directed by Rick Sparks, I Love Lucy: Live on Stage is a bright and light night at the theatre that is perfect for families...a perfectly entertaining evening that manages to make you feel welcomed into a world that is decades away. And for that, it’s a whimsical trip down memory lane for which I was totally willing to go...”

KEVIN P TAFT - FRONTEERS

“...From the TV host, to the commercials, singers, and actor sitting amongst the audience makes this show extremely fun to watch. The ambiance is innocent and fun, the actors are hilarious and interact with the audience throughout the entirety of the play... Aside from the stupendous actors, Rick Sparks vision on the show alongside Wayne Moore’s musical directing, Aaron Henderson’s artsy sets, and Shon LeBlanc’s authentic costumes created a successful, entertaining collaboration for the show.

MONICA CAMPOS _ SOCIAL EVENTS

“...I Love Lucy” is once again live and in color. The new musical stage show mimics the “live studio audience” experience of a taping of the beloved ‘50’s series, creating a fun and entertaining tribute.... This show is fun stacked on top of fun stacked on top of fun. Fans of the classic show will be in absolute heaven, but even the most casual of viewers will have a great time. If this production is as successful as it should be, there will be a tour in its future. Don’t wait that long to see it; check it out soon, before it gets its legs....”

HEY MELPOMENE (Theatre Blog)

“... It was finally time to give the people what they want. The fans have finally received what they wanted, and the lucky Angeleno’s will get to experience it first.... Rick Sparks did a fantastic job recreating this classic show. In between each set there were commercials that were likely to be set in the 50’s. Each commercial had a product re-enactment followed by a catchy ‘jingle’ to resemble the product. The set was complete with trivia contests and an ensemble and band to add a bit to its’ artistic collaboration thus making those in attendance feel like they are part of an in-studio taping...”

MEAGAN SARGENT – LA SPLASH

“...Rick Sparks directs us through two fabulous episodes of “I Love Lucy” on a sound stage done as a three camera taped show. I was transported back to those “good old days” of innocence and pure comedy that delights and transcends all that is going on in our world today. Sparks gives us a treasure of memories in this play... I got my “Lucy fix” as did other jubilant audience members. The joy that spread through the house was palpable.... a memorable gift in your marvelous production... We knew why we loved Lucy and why Sparks’s show is a tremendous success that will have a long, long run. I loved the show. If one could bottle happiness, it is this show! It is infectious!

AUDREY LINDEN – HOLLYWOOD THEATRE EXAMINER

“...a smile-inducing good time back in the fifties with Lucy and Desi... those memories have now come alive with director Rick Sparks’ “I Love Lucy Live on Stage,” a live re-creation of the ‘filming’ of two episodes from the 1950’s sitcom.

Not only are the episodes played out (using the scripts from two actual episodes), there is a studio host, live musical commercials, and The Ricky Ricardo Orchestra playing live from the Tropicana Nightclub... It is a terrific, theatrical concept, and it does not disappoint...”

MARY WRITE – THE IMITATED LIFE

“...I Love Lucy Live On Stage is delightful and makes one laugh continuously, a great job by director Rick Sparks....”

DENA BURROUGHS - LA ARTS EXAMINER

5 STARS “...is an absolutely brilliant and utterly engaging tribute to that iconic television show.... I was amazed and thrilled by the surprisingly rich matrix of diverse actions that permeated the total performance. One element that remained consistent was the absolute hilarity of this great show. I frankly cannot remember any performance in any venue in recent time that caused me to laugh so long and so hard. But it also clearly told the story and paid proper homage to the original “I Love Lucy®.” When it ended I was filled with warmth and joy. From the audience reaction I would say that we all shared that feeling because this was the first time I have ever experienced a standing ovation in a small venue. It was completely deserved and it was a proper acknowledgement to every single cast and crew member who made it happen, every single one of whom was on the top of their game.”

RON IRWIN - BURBANK ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY EXAMINER.COM

THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY?

Directed, Co-Adapted/Produced, Musical Staging and Soundtrack

Design by

Rick Sparks

Winner: 17 Theatre Awards!!!

INCLUDING 2 Directing Awards for Sparks

LA Ovation Award for Best Adaptation / 7 LA Drama Critics Circle

Awards / 3 LA Weekly Awards/ 6 Garland Awards

“An ingenious production of “They Shoot Horses” ...Is a vibrantly realized stage adaptation...In his shrewd environmental staging, director Sparks casts us, the audience, as the spectators at the dance marathon....the dramatic riches of this ambitious production...should be bottled and preserved”

F. Kathleen Foley

L.A. TIMES

BEST BET

“...HORSES is exciting, vital theater...Director Sparks’ environmental staging works brilliantly...This is theater at it’s height, and not to be missed!”

Terry Morgan

L.A. WEEKLY

PICK OF THE WEEK

“...Sparks achieves a seamless interplay of ballroom and backstage catharsis... A memorably haunting depiction of lost souls”

Julio Martinez

DAILY VARIETY

“...Has been adapted for the stage by Rick Sparks, and it’s stunning!...Thought provoking, poignant, and full of noir!...above all, credit Sparks and his cast of two dozen...”

Ed Kaufman

THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

“...Director Sparks has adapted the novel with an inspired environmental concept that drives this mesmerizing production...Sparks has proven to be a master of atmospherics in such comedies as “Down South”, and “Psycho Beach Party.” Here he plunges into darker, more challenging material to triumphant effect!”

Les Spindle

FRONTIERS

“...Sparks’ stunning, colorful adaptation does a fine job of transporting us...”

L.A. NEW TIMES

“...This new adaptation comes across as softer-edged than Pollack’s film; Sparks’ vision feels more like lyrical musical drama than nihilistic tragedy. But it proves no less potent...Sparks, who also directs, has deservedly received acclaim for his masterful recreations of time and place. In this ambitious undertaking, he taps into his knack for rich atmospherics but forges into darker, more risky terrain to triumphant effect. In an era wherein economic calamity threatens and exploitative entertainment thrives, Sparks and Carter’s shattering vision of McCoy’s venerable novel brims with social relevance-apocalypse now.”

Les Spindle

BACKSTAGE WEST

CRITIC’S CHOICE

“...Truly inspired idea...Most impressive...A brilliant theatrical concept...Aside from precision direction from Sparks, the true wonder of this piece is the exceptional cast he has assembled...”

Travis Michael Holder

ENTERTAINMENT TODAY

“...Campmeister extraordinaire, Rick Sparks overwhelmingly breaks new ground, both for himself and the local theatrical landscape. This breathtaking environmental adaptation is some kind of landmark event, and every kind of triumph for all concerned.....”

David Nichols

IN LOS ANGELES

FOUR STARS

“...This is one of those magnificently produced plays...The whole evening is a one-of-a-kind visual and emotional experience that you cannot afford to pass on! Director Rick Sparks and his writing partner Gary Carter are creative geniuses. Bravo to them and their great cast!”

Don Grigware

VALLEY SCENE MAGAZINE

“...Remarkable, poignant, extraordinary and breathtaking!”

AMERICAN RADIO NETWORK

Theatre Pick of the Week!

“Ever since I raved about this awesome play a couple of weeks back, every publication I’ve read, had done fabulous reviews on it as well...It is so great to see an excellent production get the recognition it deserves. I went back to see it again and was just as impressed as the first time! Do try to see this one!”

Pat Taylor

THE TOLUCAN TIMES

“...Boy oh boy, what a wonderful show!...Keenly adapted by Sparks, breathes a stupendous gust of life into McCoy’s hard-boiled tale...Exquisitely staged by Sparks... Horses gets a big fat “A-Rating” ...It’s that good!”

KPCC-FM

Radio Transcript

“...Beautifully adapted for the stage by theater wunderkind Rick Sparks, who also directs...we as the audience, watch in awe thanks to Sparks’ direction, who injects the sheer tragedy of the play’s core with plenty of humor and choreography that had this critic’s head spinning and heart pumping. Horses is truly a theatrical tour de force....Gets my Theater Pick of the Week, (and probably of the Year).”

KCSN-FM

Radio Transcript

PICK OF THE WEEK (YEAR)

“It’s a knock-out of a staging, visually rich and dark, with many moments of black humor and an underlying vein of the tragic... Co-author Sparks’ direction impeccable. His sense of tones and colors, shifting almost imperceptibly between the scenes and moments within scenes, has the feel of watching a fine painting unfolding brushstroke by brushstroke....This company is one worth keeping an eye on. They know what theatre is all about, and how to make it work!...”

T.H. McCulloh

SHOWMAG.COM

“...One of the most elaborate stagings I’ve seen in a long time!”

THE DAILY BREEZE

“...Sparks’ inventive staging has a feeling of period authenticity!”

LARCHMONT CHRONICLE

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

Directed, Co-Produced, Musical Soundtrack and Staging by

Rick Sparks

WINNER: L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award for Rick's
Direction

WINNER: Backstage West Award for Rick's Sound Design.

"...Sparks is a genius director who gets riveting performances from every member of his large cast...Sparks' theatrical direction for Greenway Arts' A Clockwork Orange, based on the searing Anthony Burgess novel of the same name, is almost too hot to handle....has been extended again and again....unrelenting production of this play is a rare opportunity to witness stagecraft genius at work...

no aficionado of fine stagecraft and red-hot theater should miss it..."

Polly Warfield

BACKSTAGE WEST

"...Director Rick Sparks (the driving force behind Greenway's award-winning 2001 production of "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?") and his artistic team retain a handful of references from the Kubrick film...but Sparks and company head in new directions as they combine Hong Kong action movies, the English music hall, and the circus into surreal eye candy...a lot of good work has been invested in this staging..."

Daryl H. Miller

LOS ANGELES TIMES

"...In Rick Sparks' riveting new production, the music has exploded to operatic proportion, with set pieces featuring choruses, a soaring soprano, and the Milk Bar as poetry slam....Sparks stages these encounters with phenomenal sensual energy and great menace....Sparks brings a whole new dimension to the relationship between Alex and the chaplain.

The "corruption" the chaplain speaks of finally makes sense..."

3 1/2 stars

Greg Owen

IN LOS ANGELES

“Director Rick Sparks and the Greenway Arts Alliance ensemble had already established their ability to turn a compelling but erratic film into a powerfully evocative theater piece...(Sparks’) highly inventive staging thoroughly underscores the dramatic throughline of this coming-of-age sage of gleefully sociopathic teenager Alex.”

Julio Martinez
THE DAILY NEWS

“...Power...Thrilling...Unmitigated Beauty...”

Pick of the Week!
Steven Lee Morris
LA WEEKLY

“...Always a hot director - controversial and theatrically juicy is Rick Sparks whose latest production of Anthony Burgess’ A Clockwork Orange will be another surefire hit for the Greenway Court in Hollywood. Sparks’ staging of this American premiere is meticulous to a fault - visually splendid and cinematic at every turn. His choice of Henry Mancini’s music from the film “Victor Victoria” mixed with the classical selections for the soundtrack adds a touch of class and wit.....create breathtakingly glowing images”

Best Bet!
Don Grigware
VALLEY SCENE MAGAZINE

“...see it on stage...and you get to experience Burgess’s own script...and the vision of Rick Sparks. His choreography alone...is worth the price of a ticket....Sparks explores the violent side with his own cinematically inspired nonstop sound design...Brilliant stuff, or as Alex says, Horrorshow!...”

Hank Rosenfeld
NOHO LA

“...director Rick Sparks has parlayed into a thrilling theatrical adventure. The frequently lauded Sparks, who justifiably received an avalanche of awards for his 2000 production of "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?", tops his previous achievements here, creating indelible imagery that captures both the futuristic feel and harrowing impact of Burgess' universe. He tastefully conveys the story's acts of violence and sex, which are potent yet never gratuitous..... nonstop array of eclectic background music combine to create an ambiance that pulsates with energy and excitement.... Sparks helms a generally exemplary ensemble.....

Sparks' production is as mesmerizing, as it is rewarding.”

Les Spindle
FRONTIERS MAGAZINE

“...Once again, director Rick Sparks expertly tackles a classic film icon with a visually and aurally assaulting stage adaptation sure to win as many awards next fall and winter as his *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* did last season, staged at the same groundbreaking Theatre complex...what Sparks has created anew, this time on a live stage, is a ferocious, loud, shocking, ominous prediction of society's violent totalitarian future as explored in Burgess' controversial 1962

novel...Sparks captures that civil abhorrence and our collective complacency when faced with daily doses of incredible violence with manic staging, precision fight choreography, blasts of incredibly stentorian yet appropriate music, and a stage packed with courageous, mercurial and entirely risky cast members who help set the audience's teeth to chatter and their dreams to be a tad less restful...Sparks' own fittingly overpowering sound design...Pivnick's eerie and often blinding lighting effects,...Thonnema's sultry costuming and, above all, the fight choreography conceived and staged by Sparks, then actualized and made safe by John Grantham, are nothing short of amazing...”

Travis Michael Holder
ENTERTAINMENT TODAY

“...Director Rick Sparks' production is a sinister, psychotic and sadistic look into a futuristic gangland culture. The play is as creepy and terrifying as I remember the film being back when...is packed with some of the best actors assembled on one stage and shouldn't be missed”

Charlene S. Fowler
THE BURBANK TIMES

“...Director Rick Sparks, on a very short list of LA.'s finest- makes marvelous use of the broad stage and keeps a sharp edge and spirited charge zinging through the air all evening. He has created an otherworldliness that guides the entire tone, emotionality, and look of the play. Sparks is an exceptional talent...Don't let this one get by without having a look.”

Dave DePino
SHOW MAG

“...This gritty, exciting, controversial and FLAWLESS production offers the theatrical thrill of the year so far, Hands Down! It’s now three day’s later, and I’m still reeling, in the wake of the impact and visual awe of this disturbing and dynamic experience.....is action-packed....mind altering...technically ingenious, passionately performed, and perfectly presented...the audience was transfixed throughout. Eyes darting form one powerful image to the next, with Beethoven’s haunting movements pulsating around us....the undeniable star of this show is its director, Rick Sparks. His limitless skill, vision, and artistic flair, catapults his actors and audience...every play he touches turns to gold...remember his name..”

Pat Taylor

THE TOLUCAN TIMES

“...is a fascinating spectacle that seems fully realized on stage...the lighting and music in this production are the result is a carnivalistic delight,Rick Sparks directs with a tremor portending the evil residing in each level of society.”

FLAVOR PILL ON LINE

DADDY
Directed by Rick Sparks
Hudson Theatre
Critic's Choice L.A. Weekly
Ovation Recommended (nearly five months)

'...DADDY takes a serious turn into darker and much more interesting territory. Multiple themes are brought up, including the debate over same-sex marriage and the perils of workplace dating... Rick Sparks' thoughtful production...a genuinely involving, uninterrupted 100 minutes...Daddy winds down to its melodramatic, but logically plotted and absorbing, conclusion.'

Bob Verini
DAILY VARIETY

'... bittersweet play exceeds expectations...is blessed with Rick Sparks' sensitive direction... this insightful and deeply affecting work... this groundbreaking drama profoundly illuminates currently controversial issues surrounding same-sex marriage.

Les Spindle
CRITIC'S CHOICE
Backstage West

'DADDY Dan Via's Off-Broadway hit, receiving its L.A. premiere....Director Rick Sparks elicits finely nuanced performances from his three principals...'

Neal Weaver
LA WEEKLEY
'GO!' Critics' Choice

"...Daddy is delightful and moving...superbly directed by Rick Sparks...a delightful evening at the theatre...Any gay man who has a gay best friend can relate to the funny and complicated relationship between Colin and Stewart in Daddy... I highly recommend you see Daddy..."

Greg Hernandez
GREGINHOLLYWOOD

"...Under the direction of Rick Sparks, Daddy offers unexpected twists, well timed laughs, relevancy, and fluid transitions. Believability is a defining factor that draws the audience deeply into the lives of the characters... superbly crafted and touching play about the convergent complexities of defining love, friendship in an anti-equality political arena..."

Mialka Bonadonna-Morano
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

'Stunningly brilliant, well crafted play, Daddy....directed by Rick Sparks... Despite the moments of comedy, the play has a very dark edge to it. Sparks describes it as an urban Greek Tragicomedy....'

Serita Stevens
SPLASH MAGAZINE

".....Director Rick Sparks guides his cast with an even hand smoothly pacing the action peppered with enough tension to keep the audience involved and curious."

-EDGE

PSYCHO BEACH PARTY

Produced/Direction/Choreography/Musical Scoring by RICK SPARKS

* Winner of 'BEST DIRECTOR OF COMEDY'

LA Weekly Theatre Awards

* WINNER OF 5 DRAMA LOUGUE AWARDS including Direction and Choreography

'...Hip and Hilarious!...'

F. Kathleen Foley

LA TIMES

CRITICS' CHOICE

'...Here, under Rick Sparks' smashing direction it sparkles as subversive comedy...this wild bikini of a show...the definitive parody...'

Steven Lee Morris

L.A. WEEKLY

'...A hoot of a satire...11 member, bright eyed cast springs n stage to period rock'n roll in a delicious number...but propelling all this and giving the production it's aerodynamic lift is director and choreographer Rick Sparks, who was only 6 when 'Beach Blanket Bingo' rode it's box office wave in 1965. Sparks has mined the play's bountiful parody and tapped into it's unexpected layer of warmth...it's ample, open heart'

Ray Loynd

DAILY VARIETY

'...Near-perfect production by director Rick Sparks...with kitsch, God is in the details, and Sparks has marshaled a top-flight team...bust most of the credit should go to Sparks, who also choreographed the climatic luau dance number. He has lovingly created a production that lampoons the absurdities of the beach-blanket genre even as it cherishes them. Charles Busch would be proud'

Christopher Isherwood

BACKSTAGE/WEST

'...is simply delightful...first rate as director Rick Sparks guides this hilarious ensemble with spark and vigor...promises an endless wave of laughter!'

LOS ANGELES READER

'...It is a laugh-a-minute spoof...Director/Choreographer Rick Sparks definitely had to know his stuff when putting this all together...you are caught up in non-stop laughter... quickly gaining a cult return audience...it very well may run longer'

Pat Taylor

THE TOLUCAN

CLUTTER

**Direction and Musical Soundtrack Design by
Rick Sparks**

The Colony Theatre Burbank

“...As staged by Rick Sparks for the Colony Theatre, this examination of the Collyer brothers — the world's most famous packrats — is shamelessly entertaining...illuminating and funny...Doses of this breathless, believe-it-or-not style — complete with a heavy-breathing musical soundtrack — help move the show along.... This 'Clutter' may be worth spreading around...(this) "Clutter" is already worth a lot....the vigor and humor of "Clutter" prove that fidelity to the facts sometimes yields a much livelier yarn.”

Don Shirley
L.A. Times
CRITIC'S CHOICE

“...Clutter is charming, delightful and wonderfully well staged...wise, generous and witty... (thank) especially Rick Sparks for the inspired direction...bottom line: an ambitious and thoroughly entertaining evening of theater”

Ed Kaufman
Hollywood Reporter

“...Rick Sparks has mounted a brilliant production...Sparks brings an almost choreographic quality, particularly notable in a wonderful duet in which the two superb Character Men tell the police all the rumors they've heard about the Collyers....Sparks also brings out the warmth in Saltzman's script which empathizes with the appallingly pitiful brothers...This is one of the strongest new plays The Colony has developed. It will be hard to top this production.”

Laura Hitchcock
Curtain Up

“...Clutter exudes clarity...Rick Sparks' compelling production, deploying comedy to tackle a subject one would expect to find approached with hushed naturalism, that give this play tensile strength and the power of an impassioned fable...the fascinating thing about Clutter is that it never substitutes self-delighting invention for real intellectual insight, and was probably as much fun to create as to watch...”

Maurice Barnfather
L.A. Times Burbank Leader

“...The scope of this piece is so panoramic that it takes a director of meticulous vision like Rick Sparks to flesh it out, make the pieces fit just right, enlighten - and, simultaneously of course, entertain (also composer of the musical score)...If Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde were alive today, what a curious and heavenly team they and Sparks would make! This is a charmer.”

Don Grigware
NoHo L.A.

“...The Colony Theatre offering is fine enough to be an early contender for best play/ production/ ensemble of 2004. Director Richard Sparks mesmerizing radiates the play’s combined wit, frolic and deep probing of the bonds of brotherhood...director Spark’s absolutely perfect mood-setting 1920’s-1940’s soundtrack...I’m honor bound to not reveal the circuitous journey or solution to the strange mysterious saga encountered in “Clutter”. But I assure you it’s an absolutely riveting, yet surprisingly hilarious and ultimately most humanly uplifting journey you will want to take.”

Joseph Sirota
Easy Reader

“...Staged with a perfectly paced understated sense of farce by director Rick Sparks, ...plays like an engrossing, extended comedy act...impressively staged...”

Julio Martinez
Daily New

“...Sparks’ vibrant direction provide much entertainment and food for thought...Sparks contributes a wonderful soundtrack of eclectic music to underscore the action, providing the rich ambiance of a vintage Hollywood film...”

Les Spindle
Backstage West

“...Under the ingenious vision of Rick Sparks seamless, well-paced direction, this entire cast soars in flawless performances. This is one for your must-see list...a winning production all around!”

Pat Taylor
Tolucan Times

"Clutter" Plays to Packed House...Director Rick Sparks deserves credit for making a potentially static story fascinating, weaving scenes back and forth in time as the brothers become more eccentric and reclusive. In a discussion with the audience after the play he revealed that he had spent time with a self-help group of obsessive collectors to learn more about this strange disorder...a riveting play...the play is engaging and engrossing... it is well worth seeing.”

Cynthia Citron
Ira Fistell's show KABC

“...Director Rick Sparks also deserves credit for keeping the show properly balanced. There is no doubt that the Collyers' collecting and extreme frugality is funny, but Sparks makes sure the audience doesn't get so caught up in the humor that the tragedy at the heart of the story is forgotten. The result is a light comedy that is more memorable for a few touching moments than the laughs inherent in its subject matter.”

Sharon Perlmutter
Talkinbroadway.com

DIVORCE! THE MUSICAL

**Staged and Directed by
Rick Sparks**

*** WINNER: Best Director of a Musical LA WEEKLY AWARDS
*Nominated for same by LA Ovations**

"...a theatrical hat trick...Director Rick Sparks and his uniformly amazing cast suffer no slip-ups en route to a practically perfect staging...as for Sparks, he assembles the show's challenging components with the skill of a puzzle master. What results is genuinely artful, a vivid mosaic assembled from the cracked pieces of a shattered relationship...."

F. Kathleen Foley

**LA Times
CRITIC'S CHOICE**

"...Erin Kamler's witty and entertaining new musical satire... Director Rick Sparks gets clean, accomplished performances from his five-person ensemble. sophisticated musical juxtapositions and harmonies..."

Steven Leigh Morris

**LA Weekly
'GO'**

"CRITICS' PICK...this production proves that in the right hands, even cauliflower can be turned into art...Kamler's score is cohesive and interesting...But the hero here is Rick Sparks, who stages and directs with great thought to narrative and the audience's experience, and whose choreography is delightful and looks good on all the performers..."

Dany Margolies

Backstage West

"...Hilarious and tuneful new musical... Director Rick Sparks and a splendid five-member cast bring renewed vitality to the genre of original small-scale musicals, providing a terrific world premier rendition of this satirical gem....It's rare to find a comedic musical in which the trenchancy of the social commentary is as engaging as the songs...the two leads are stars in the making...smashing support are versatile performers Wagner, Stevens and Franklin....Sparks' choreography is lively and fun...the three member combo keeps the joint jumping supported by the excellence of David O's musical direction and arrangements...Design elements are likewise exemplary..."

Les Spindle

Frontiers/INLA

"Worth watching...Kamler's score is lively and witty...Rick Sparks gets maximum mileage from it."

Don Shirley

Los Angeles CityBeat

"Kamler's lyrics are funny as all get-out and perceptive as well....Director Rick Sparks has proven himself one of our top comedy directors...he does it again"

Steven Stanley

Stage Scene LA

"...Rick Sparks, a multi-awarded winning and charmingly visionary director expertly moves his cast around with impeccable timing, and lots of heart!...I foresee Off Broadway beckoning...David O and his band skillfully drive the message home..."

Pat Taylor

The Toluca Times

'... Recommended for it's cast and direction...Rick Sparks is such a talented director and should be producing / directing on Broadway at this point in time. ...He puts the show in showmanship...as always he rises to the occasion...prolific staging ... as in a fast paced game show, you get caught up in it's entertaining frenzy..."

Don Grigware

Grigware Talks Theatre

"Every divorce should be this fun"

Ophelia Chong

KCET

"...a remarkably fun show..."

KateWestInterviews.

DOWN SOUTH

Directed, Musically Staged and Soundtrack Design by Rick Sparks
Rattlestick Theatre N.Y.
Jewel Theatre, Los Angeles
Nominated for Best Director of Comedy
L.A. WEEKLY Theater Awards 2000

“...This is madcap comedy of the silliest order....So crass it’s actually risky. Fortunately, director Rick Sparks knows how to finesse a camp extravaganza....one of the most manic dance scenes this side of the Peppermint Lounge. But then, this entire cast gets wild and crazy-and gets away with it...”

F. Kathleen Foley
LA TIMES

...An orgiastic farce!...Direction by Rick Sparks, so shamelessly goofy as to risk ridicule, succeeds in appealing to the snickering adolescent extant in most adults; he choreographs a musical number near the end that is irresistibly silly”

Bruce Webber
NY TIMES

...Director Rick Sparks deserves most of the credit for creating a lively production from Field’s mediocre script...”

E.F.
TIME OUT NEW YORK

“...A non-stop hoot, and it sparkles under the faced paced and stylish direction of Rick Sparks...Achieving a masterpiece of stylization, Sparks’ interpretation is broadly satiric without slipping into camp...Sparks and Field’s buoyant laugh-fest, they also make for the funniest show seen by this critic in many a moon.”

Les Spindle
BACKSTAGE WEST
CRITICS CHOICE

“...brilliantly directed by Rick Sparks, Down South features a cast of expert no holds barred farceurs...”

THE WESTSIDER

“...Under Rick Sparks’ creative direction, some heavy--handed fun is extracted from this cartoon of revolution at home and abroad...”

Karl Levett
BACKSTAGE EAST

“...Audiences who remember director/choreographer Sparks’ work on Psycho Beach Party, and Highballs Ahoy!, already have witnessed his gift for merging sitcom and drag show with the surreal. Here, however, he reaches some new level of wacky, with the climatic group dance as chokingly funny a set piece as one can recall at present...a downright screech, and heaven help any viewers with small bladders that forswear Depends.”

David Nichols
IN LOS ANGELES
THREE AND A HALF STARS

“...Director Rick Sparks, who also is responsible for music, sound and staging of a hysterical musical dance number, a la West Side Story, makes this one hour-ten romp a total delight of perfect comedic timing and crisp pacing, with sight gags galore. He and his energetic cast are all on the same note of high-style, controlled camp, offering caricatures to tickle the most stubborn funny bone. I laughed a lot and my face hurt from smiling...”

Dave DePino
NIGHTLIFE/AFTERDARK

“...Rick Sparks sleekly directs the farce in the style of a Lil’ Abner cartoon...”

Steven Lee Morris
LA WEEKLY
PICK OF THE WEEK

“...A cocktail fueled dinner party (ingenuously acted out here in fast motion) and you have all the makings of a laugh-out-loud wank-a-thon...Rick Sparks keeps Down South in its manic spiral until its final dance number which has got to be seen to be believed”

Robert Kent
NEXT MAGAZINE N.Y.

“...A lively, exaggerated and frenetic farce aided by Rick Sparks’ splendid direction. The result is an entertaining laugh fest...”

Mario Fratti
AMERICA TODAY NY

“...Sparks’ balletic staging of the delicious opening scene...his punchy direction amply supports a number of fine, exuberant performances....”

CURTAIN UP N.Y.

“Run don’t walk to the last two performances of Down South...superbly directed by Rick Sparks...the whole group breaks into the evening’s best scene, featuring the entire cast in 40’s/50’s synchronized dance (this scene will leave you rolling and laughing in your seats)...director Rick Sparks has hit jackpot, as he keeps the stage moving and characters interacting in what could easily not be funny under another’s direction...”

Conrad Corall
LA THEATRE FORUM / THE ACTOR SITE

“...The direction by Rick Sparks is solid and competent, with a few extra special things that really make the show pop. Telephone calls between the couples are particularly well staged, with the caller storming on set leaving a trail of phone cord connecting to nowhere. A dance sequence toward the end of the play really pushes the situations and characters over the top in the best possible way...”

Kourtney Rutherford
SHOW BUSINESS

HIGHBALLS AHOY!

**Produced/Directed/Choreographed/Conceived and Co-Written
By
Rick Sparks**

“...a deliciously naughty nautical cocktail of camp...as director, Sparks guides his crew into hysterical parodies...this cruise is well-worth the fair!”

Jana H. Monji

L.A. TIMES
CRITICS' CHOICE

‘...Hilarious...no sea tale unskewered in this nautical musical burlesque slapstick...

L.A. WEEKLY
PICK OF THE WEEK

“...the stage craft is always sharp...not to be missed!...”

BUZZ MAGAZINE
THREE STARS

“...Many inspired whacked out moments!...Use any cliché you want, but this show is just plain FUN!...Sell out crowds...easy to see why!...”

Michael Ellis

NIGHTLIFE MAGAZINE
BEST BET

“...Laughed? I thought I would pee my pants! I must say, Highballs Ahoy! Is one of the funniest theatre/cabaret experiences I have ever had. It's a non-stop cavalcade of comedy in the truest sense of the phrase...Big show-stopping number aptly entitled, 'Hollywood, Hollywood, Hollywood', you can't help but burst out laughing...Congratulations to director/producer Rick Sparks for pulling all this together. There are tons and tons of laughs in this show and you know when sound and lighting cues are getting laughs, that the director has done something right. If you need a good laugh and your looking for a show, this is it!”

John Price

4 FRONT MAGAZINE
CRITICS' CHOICE

“...Highballs Ahoy! offers up plenty of laughs throughout...a solid and worthwhile outing...The spoofs are deft...the staging and choreography also work really well, no small effort considering that the entire cast is running amok in the audience in a room that’s not exactly built for interactive theatre. Sparks’ direction is, as usual, spot on and firm, keeping the inmates in check....Nod to the dance number with the mirror. We haven’t laughed that hard since Quayle was Vice President...

Joe Morris

DRAMA-LOGUE

“...Two hours of unrelenting, no-holds barred, insane fun...Rick Sparks jolts the pace with well executed special effects and environmental-styled staging that keeps seeping out into the audience...Do yourself a favor and reserve yourself a slot on this cruise!

Les Spindle

FRONTIERS MAGAZINE

CRITICS’ CHOICE

“...Prepare to embark on THE cruise of a lifetime!...Comedy that has you doubled over in laughter every second...The musical numbers are also a delight given that half of them go so awry that you can only sit back and laugh helplessly...Rick Sparks, director and producer of this nautical extravaganza, has scored a huge hit. Along with his co-writers, they have created a show that grabs you from the moment you take your seat, and never lets you go. The dialogue is funny, crisp and never lets up in pace and timing, and the songs are silliness personified...Head straight for the SS Peggy Lee. With any luck, you’ll be able to book a trip as reservations are tight, and the house sells out quickly.

But the trip is well worth it!

Mary Marin

FEMALE FYI

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOLLYWOOD

Directed and Choreographed by Rick Sparks

LA Weekly's Critic's Choice!

Nominated 2 LA Weekly Awards: including Best Director of a Musical, Best Musical

"...A fitting tribute to tourism and Tinsel town...The Carmen Miranda number "Bananas" is well worth the price of admission...Rick Sparks keeps the pace snappy and the choreography humorous..."

**Jana J. Monji
L.A. TIMES**

"...Now the incredible Rick Sparks has waved his magic wand over There's No Place Like Hollywood....This review shines big and bright...Sparks' creativity is astounding, and this latest endeavor is pure gold. Let's hope it runs forever!"

**Don Grigware
VALLEY SCENE**

"...Rick Sparks directs and choreographs the show flawlessly; I wonder if there is anything this man can't do, especially after the work he did with "They shoot Horses" I think brilliance is the word...."

**Barbara Sylvia
KCSN-FM**

"...Director/Choreographer Rick Sparks paces this paean to filmdom with a leisurely, affectionate tone....There is even a Busby Berkley production number worthy of the Master..."

**Melinda Schupmann
SHOWMAG.COM**

"...Sparks clearly went for actor/singers more than impersonators, which was probably not only fair, but the sanest choice...respectable acting heightened by Sparks' hefty sense of good-natured fun...."

**Terri Roberts
BACKSTAGE WEST**

"...What a joy! This rollicking, wacky, campy "movie biz" musical is jam-packed with talent, loaded with laughs and tons of fun! Under the sassy direction of Rick Sparks, this entire high-energy cast of nine entertain and amaze as they riotously impersonate and poke fun at countless stars of days gone by...see this delightful extravaganza!"

**Pat Taylor
TOLLUCAN TIMES/CANYON CRIER**

"...Rick Sparks, recamped from the Depression-era marathon age of They Shoot Horses, Don't They?, directs and choreographs in vintage espresso-powered manner...There's No Place Like Hollywood has every reason to achieve cult status."

**David Nichols
IN MAGAZINE**

"...The shows cast is top-notch and director/choreographer Rick Sparks keeps the lighthearted fun in full swing the whole way through...A well-executed spectacle in the heart of Hollywood, this is a thoroughly enjoyable evening in the theater"

**Devon M. Schwartz
DIGITAL CITY.COM**

A CHARLIE BROWN COMMERCIAL CHRISTMAS
CONCEPT/DIRECTOR/MUSICAL STAGING/CO-WRITER/CO-PRODUCER: RICK SPARKS

*** NOMINATED For Best Director of a Musical and Best Ensemble**
L.A. Weekly Theatre Awards

‘...Rick Spark’s non-gooey musical re-creates the inventiveness of it’s progenitor, A Charlie Brown Christmas, the classic holiday-themed cartoon based on Charles Schultz’s ‘Peanuts’ characters...the skeletal plot involves a suburban Chicago family gathered in the living room to eat Swanson TV dinners and watch A Charlie Brown Christmas. It’s message bemoaning the commercialization of Christmas still resonates today...the entire animated cartoon (plus a couple of songs from You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown) is re-enacted onstage, not to mention kitschy TV commercials (Alka Seltzer), Palmolive and Hai Karate are highlights)...Most of the characters are vividly brought to life...’

Miriam Jacobson

LA WEEKLY

PICK OF THE WEEK

‘...More fun, Messages in ‘Charlie’...Rick Sparks’ new musical fable for the stage presented by Greenway Arts Alliance offers the same story and the same message but adds a new layer of meaning by contrasting the well known Peanuts tale with that of a troubled 1969 family, gathered around their Swanson TV dinners to watch ‘A Charlie Brown Christmas’...it certainly adds a new level of fun that actors perform their own cheeky renditions of TV commercials circa 1969 from the Playtex Cross-Your-Heart Bra to the Marlboro Man. The action swings between the tension in the family living room – the group is minus one son, who is fighting in Vietnam-and brightly colored scenes from the Peanuts cartoon...’

Diane Huffman

LA TIMES

‘...A Charlie Brown Commercial Christmas is an original and different holiday show...it’s nostalgic, funny and poignant. and the large cast do it all justice...’

Archie Rothman

MORE THEATRE

‘...a smart, silly, and sensationally entertaining musical fable. it’s a must-see-to-be believed theater adventure...quirky and jubilous direction by Rick Sparks...’

PICK OF THE WEEK!

KUSC Classical FM 91.5

“...Sparks’ inventive staging has a feeling of period authenticity!”

LARCHMONT CHRONICLE

WHERE'S MY MONEY?

by John Patrick Shanley

Directed and Musical Soundtrack design by
Rick Sparks

“...The LA premiere of John Patrick Stanley’s “Where’s My Money?” is about as fine a production of this play as could be imagined. Rick Sparks, one of the most consistently excellent local theater directors, has brought his considerable craft to bear on this show, and it positively sparkles as a result. The cast is terrific and the laughs are huge....Sparks also deserves credit for a suspenseful moment at the end of the play that is genuinely startling....”

Terry Morgan
DAILY VARIETY

“...Billed as a “dark comedy about sex, marriage, and uninvited ghosts,” this quirky, great looking production is a must see laugh riot...*Top-notch* performances throughout, under the wildly creative direction of L.A.’s golden boy, Rick Sparks, along with Shanley’s crisp and caustic script, offer up the magical trio of ingredients in this delicious feast of fun. Every play Sparks directs seems to shine at the yearly theatre awards affairs. His best director winning credits are lengthy, and his vision is always remarkable...round up your fun lovin’ theatre friends and do catch this one!”

Pat Taylor
The Toluca Times