
SOCIETY FOR

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I am one of the orchestrators of the 3rd International Conference on the Future of Monogamy and Non-monogamy, which happened at the University of California, Berkeley, Feb 21-23, 2014. This event featured academic presentations and panel discussions on issues relevant to emerging trends and social changes related to marriage, family, sexuality and relationships. Many of these presentations involved examinations of art and media related to these subjects.

This year, we also scheduled a performance art production by a troupe of artists (Lianna Walden Productions), entitled "*Bi, Hung, Fit...and Married*" The show had been described as being somewhat comparable to the famous "Vagina Monologues," but which focused on issues related to bisexuality, polyamory, and open marriage. Although there were numerous members of the general public present, the bulk of the audience consisted of psychologists, social scientists, counselors, media analysts, propaganda experts, and even a few art critics and professional entertainers. In other words, it could be considered a very tough audience to please.

Although I had some preliminary information, and had been assured the performance would be of a fairly high quality, even so I was still somewhat

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skeptical and pessimistic. I have watched quite a number of "performance art" pieces in recent years, and in most cases, I have found them to be rather disappointing. Much contemporary "performance art" seems to consist of poorly-conceived, incoherent esoteric head trips that leave audiences dazed and perplexed, puzzling over what the performance was trying to say.

However, "*Bi, Hung, Fit...and Married.*" was a most refreshing exception on all counts. I personally found the performance to be not only quite entertaining, but quite frankly, one of the most thought-provoking, and artistically interesting theatrical productions I have attended in recent memory. Although it deals with several highly controversial and emotionally-charged issues that might shock and offend at least *some* more traditional audiences, such as bisexuality, marital infidelity, and consensual nonmonogamy, the production genuinely seemed to resonate with nearly all of the audience members. The crowd loved it.

This show is extremely well-crafted and very well thought out, obviously the product of a considerable process of refinement and sophisticated craftsmanship. It is remarkable not merely for its artistic merit, but also for its extreme ability to evoke responses from the audience. The show raised numerous issues (such as marital unhappiness, suppressed and unacknowledged sexual desires, what genuine intimacy actually is, and the extremely high levels of courage sometimes required to share honestly regarding delicate issues characterized by high levels of emotional vulnerability), that exist in a wide range of relationships. Though ostensibly about a bi-sexual married man, the extraordinary frankness with which the matters were addressed in the performance was something that even single people and completely heterosexual men (and women) were easily able to relate to. Several members remarked that it was almost as if the actor was giving voice to many things a high percentage of the audience had felt at some point in their lives, but had difficulty articulating. One audience member said, "It was like he was reading what was in my heart, and speaking out loud all those things I was never able to say."

This was a most remarkable production, and I whole-heartedly recommend it to anyone with an interest in exploring the complexities, contradictions, and subtleties of contemporary marriages and relationships.

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