



STANDING ROOM ONLY

« Here's your sign! Southern comedian and star of "Blue Collar TV," **Bill Engvall** appears 7 p.m. at the Music Center at Strathmore, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, Md. Tickets are \$42.75. Call 301-581-5200.

LISTENING POSTS

The Peiffer Ensemble

Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, 2700 F St. NW, Washington; 6 p.m.; Free; 202-467-4600

Washington Youth Foundation Annual Concert

Kennedy Center Concert Hall, 2700 F St. NW, Washington; 7:30 p.m.; \$25; 202-467-4600

Rhonda Vincent and The Rage

The Birchmere, 3701 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria, Va.; 7:30 p.m.; \$22.50; 703-549-7500

WPAS: Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz Band

The Lincoln Theatre, 1215 U St. NW, Washington; 8 p.m.; \$36 to \$46; 202-328-9177 or www.thelincolntheatre.org

Bill Frisell's Unspeakable Orchestra

The George Washington University's Lisner Auditorium, 730 21st St. NW, Washington; 8 p.m.; \$20 to \$35/\$15 GW students; 202-994-6800

✓ My Favorite Highway, with The Consequence and Suburban Riot

Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna, Va.; 8 p.m.; \$12/\$10 advance; 703-255-1566 ext. 8

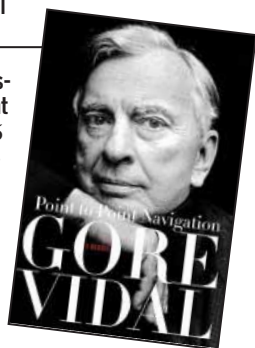
BOOK TALK

'KNITTING WITH BALLS'

Michael Del Vecchio discusses "Knitting with Balls" - 7 p.m. **Venue:** Politics and Prose, 5015 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington; **Tix:** Free; **Info:** 202-364-1919

'POINT TO POINT NAVIGATION'

Gore Vidal discusses "Point to Point Navigation" - 8:15 p.m. **Venue:** Wesley United Methodist Church, 5312 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington; **Tix:** \$10; **Info:** 202-364-1919



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STAGES » GALLERIES

Grand illusions

Corcoran turns art into a surreal experience

By **Robin Tierney**
Special to The Examiner

Rarely do the words "annoying" and "awesome" so aptly describe the same experience, but such is the case for the "Paradise Institute" — the virtual surreality show now on view at the Corcoran.

It's worth every minute, all 13 of them.

Through an amazing sleight of sight and audio, the multimedia installation jettisons Sensurround into the 21st century, transporting viewers to the edge of reality and imagination. Created by artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, the experience of this Venice Biennale award-winner is akin to settling into a multi-sensory moshpit.

Having earned accolades for site-specific "artwalks" guided by Cardiff via headphones, the Canadian couple's 2001 fanta-fabrication sets a high-water mark for video installations.

The small, simple rectangular wood structure gives no clue of life inside. Yet upon entering either of two doors, you feel convinced you've entered a Twilight Zone-like movie palace. Taking a seat in the rear balcony, you face a huge sea of velveteen seats and side-balconies converging upon a huge screen in the distance. It can't be real, yet how could mere mortals create an illusion of per-

DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT

WALKING TOURS

"In Fala's Footsteps" - 7 to 8 p.m. **Venue:** National Mall, meet outside bookstore at entrance to Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, Washington; **Tix:** \$10; **Info:** 202-484-1565

COMEDY

Robert Schimmel - 8 and 10:30 p.m. **Venue:** DC Improv, 1140 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington; **Tix:** \$25; **Info:** 202-296-7008

THEATER

Katie Couric's "The Brand New Kid"

- 7:30 p.m. **Venue:** Kennedy Center Family Theater, 2700 F St. NW, Washington; **Tix:** \$15; **Info:** 202-467-4600

Washington National Opera - "Madama Butterfly" - 7:30 p.m. **Venue:** Kennedy Center Opera House, 2700 F St. NW, Washington; **Tix:** \$45 to \$300; **Info:** 202-467-4600

"My Fair Lady" - 8 p.m. **Venue:** Signature Theatre, 3806 S. Four Mile Run Drive, Arlington, Va.; **Tix:** \$37 to \$63; **Info:** 703-820-9771



CORCORAN SHOWS

"Paradise Institute" and "redefined" run until early January; "Joan of Arc" runs Saturday through Jan. 21.

Venue: Corcoran Gallery of Art, New York Avenue and 17th Street NW, Washington **More info:** 202-639-1700 or www.corcoran.org

fect perspective, the soft glow of dimmed theater lights glinting off the ornate architectural details, exact down to the dust drifting in the projector's beam?

Donning headphones, you're anchored smack-dab in the middle of whisperers, heavy breathers, scene-spoilers, popcorn-munchers, cell phone harborers, and latecomers stumbling among the seated. Ewww, the humanity ... unaware or without care of invading the gentle viewer's personal space.

Meanwhile, a film noir fills the screen, drawing the viewer in —

quite literally. The action seems to overflow into your reality, the odd-ball characters turning the drama into a web.

The deception is at turns sublimely delightful and supremely obnoxious. The artistry transcends sense-tweaking chicanery. By the way, was that an air current or someone's breath tingling the back of our ears?

"Paradise Institute" is part of the Corcoran's museum-wide exhibit, "redefined: Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collection." The 190 objects include other trickster installations, such as two video shorts from Clare Rojas and Andrew Jeffrey Wright. In "The Manipulators" and "Ich Bin Ein Manipulator," they deface — no, reface and reimagine — the pages of consumerism-centric fashion magazines using markers and typing correction fluid. Put on the headphones and take this turbo-graftito joyride.

Vernon Fisher's 1983 tri-part mixed-media tells of a wife attempting to trace her spouse's secret trips by matching the car radio's adjustable punch-buttons with stations in far-off locales. Moving from timeless to topical, Patricia Piccinini lures unsuspecting viewers with a life-like little girl playing with mutant blobs — welcome to "Still Life with Stem Cells."

The cineplex can wait. Immerse yourself in "Paradise" and "redefined" before they disappear from view early January. You'll be sufficiently fired up to check out the gallery's new "Joan of Arc," which opens Saturday, before you leave.

THEATER

Horse sense

By **Doug Krentzlin**
Special to The Examiner

Motion pictures can do many things impossible to achieve on a live stage, but film has, at least, one major disadvantage that theater is mercifully exempt from: It is the most literal of dramatic mediums.

Take Peter Shaffer's 1973 play "Equus," which is currently being revived by the Washington Shakespeare Company, a psychological mystery concerning analyst Dr. Martin Dysart (Christopher Henley) and his attempts to fathom why troubled teenager Alan Strang (Jay Hardee) blinded six horses in a stable. The horses are portrayed by actors using a combination of masks, mime and choreography.

Sidney Lumet's 1977 film version was doomed from the start because, due to the cinema's demand for the appearance of reality, there was no question that real horses would be used, thereby robbing the script of much of its poetry.

To fully appreciate the beauty and power of "Equus," you have to see the stage original, and it would be difficult to imagine a better rendition of Shaffer's classic than WSC's superlative production. Additionally, in a prime instance of necessity being the mother of invention, the company's budget limitations required a slight change in casting that actually adds a whole new dimension to the story.

Not being able to afford half a dozen extra actors to play the horses, director Lee Mikeska Gardner opted to have the supporting cast double in those roles. As a result, in the play's climax, when Alan re-creates his horrendous act, he is not only mutilating the horses, but also exacting violent retribution against all the authority figures (his parents, the stable owner, etc.) in his life, a touch with almost endless Freudian implications.

'EQUUS'

Washington Shakespeare Company's production of "Equus" runs through Dec. 3.

Venue: WSC's Clark Street Playhouse, 601 South Clark Street, Arlington, Va.

Performances: 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday (and Nov. 26) and 2 p.m. Saturdays & Sunday

Tickets: \$25 to \$35
More info: 703-418-4808

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