

## THEATRE



San Pedro

SQUARE

## Driving Miss Daisy

Nov. 12 - 27

Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays \* 8pm

Saturdays also \* 3pm

Sundays \* 2pm

Special 3pm matinees

Thanksgiving Weekend (Fri. &amp; Sat.)

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Lawrence Whitcomb


**ODD COUPLE** *Miss Daisy (Beverly Griffith) strikes up an unexpected friendship with her chauffeur, Hoke (James Creer).*

## Coming Up Daisy

ALFRED UHRY's *Driving Miss Daisy*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for drama and served as the basis for the Oscar-winning film, is now seeing a revival. There is currently a production on Broadway starring James Earl Jones and Vanessa Redgrave, and here in the Bay Area, the Tabard Theatre Company is staging its own version.

For those who don't know, the Miss Daisy referred to in the title is an elderly Georgia Jewish woman no longer able to safely operate a motor vehicle. The driving is done by Hoke Colburn, an aging black man whom Daisy's son, Boolie, hires, completely against his mother's wishes. Daisy doesn't get along with her new chauffeur. She is bitter about the erosion of her independence and has the prejudices against blacks that one would expect of a Southerner born in 1876. But the more time they spend together, the more they realize they have in common. A lifelong friendship has begun.

The story spans the years from 1948 to 1973, a turbulent and often violent period in America. Terrorists blow up the Reform Jewish temple that Daisy attends (a real-life event), and Daisy later takes an interest in the activities of Martin Luther King Jr. However, the play is presented as an understated narrative about the relationship between a few people, not as a sweeping historical panorama. The set design, tasteful in its simplicity, helps keep the focus on the characters. A group of four chairs represent the cars that Hoke drives, and this setup proves remarkably convincing once the actors start to do their thing.

Tabard Theatre has assembled a fine cast, whose performances ring true throughout the play. The role of Hoke is closely associated with Morgan Freeman, who played the part in both the movie and the original theatrical production. Nevertheless, James Creer's take on Hoke is highly personalized, never for a moment recalling Freeman's. Beverly Griffith and Toby Cordone are similarly original in their respective roles as Daisy and Boolie. At no point does it seem that they are trying to act like Jessica Tandy or Dan Aykroyd.

There isn't much else to say about Tabard's *Driving Miss Daisy* that hasn't already been said about previous productions or the movie. It remains, as it always has been, a touching and bittersweet comedy, and watching the bond grow between the two main characters is a heartwarming experience.—Sean Conwell

STAGE

### Driving Miss Daisy

Through Nov. 27

 Theatre on  
 Tabard Theatre  
 Company, San Pedro  
 Square, San Jose

\$15-\$24