

DRAMA-LOGUE

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

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A **NOTHER RETURN** to the Bay Area scene is a new work by **Gary Aylesworth**, a most prolific and impressive writer, director and performer. Aylesworth's startling performance pieces are steeped in San Francisco history such as *Kerouac-ie!* (the 1960s beatniks), *The Matador Club* (local novelist **Barnaby Conrad**) and *The Bohemian Grove* (about the world-famous Bohemian Club in which such real-life figures as **George Schultz**, **Caspar Weinberger** and **Herbert Hoover** get involved with a variation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). For his latest work, *I Was a Go-Go Dancer for Gurdjieff*, Aylesworth has returned to the '60s in which a postal worker finds herself despairing after all the hippie-drug scenes ("Is that all there is?") and turns to a spiritual quest for enlightenment through the teachings of Russian writer/mystic **G.I. Gurdjieff**. In order to support this new \$200-a-session habit she finds herself earning money as a topless go-go dancer in the city's North Beach and as an actress in X-rated porno films.

Aylesworth once again dazzles with his on-target, lightning character changes; he is incredible

both as a writer and actor in capturing the perfect, minute gesture or voice inflection that instantly summons up a total creation whether it be pimp, guru or porno dealer. He is most ably abetted by **Peter Newton** who not only furnishes the musical accompaniment but has some startling transformations of his own. For *Go-Go Dancer* Aylesworth has brought into the case **Harriet Schiffer**, an equally respected writer/director/performer in the Bay Area, who portrays Megan Muldoon, the heroine seeking "the meaning of life." Schiffer can be seemingly unrestrained as an actress with her satirical (and hysterical) topless dance or her funny forays into **Tennessee Williams** territory as Maxine in *Night of the Iguana*. Actually, her performing energies are grounded on truth; consequently, she makes situations believable no matter how bizarre. As a writer, Aylesworth demands a great deal of his audiences. Like **Stoppard** and **Ayckbourn**, he delights in daring audiences to keep up with his mercurial mental meanderings and frequently the transitions are as jarring as they are enjoyable. This is a theatrical talent who deserves more recognition than he is currently getting.