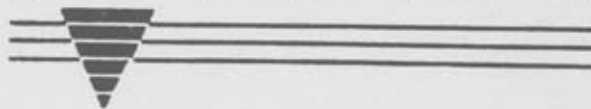


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THE ADVOCATE

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BAY AREA STAGE NOTES:  
A ROSE IS PLUCKED

Gary Aylesworth – playwright, actor and director – was among those who performed at the Rose. Last spring, Aylesworth, assisted by Peter Newton, presented *The Matador Club*, a dazzling, metaphorical juxtaposition of stand-up comedy with bullfighting. In November 1985 Aylesworth presented his latest piece, *Kerouac-I.E.!*, at the Capp Street Theater.

Performed by Aylesworth and Newton, the play outlines the career of Jack Kerouac, author of *On the Road* and primary spokesman for the Beat Generation. Aylesworth interpreted Kerouac's life as a desperate and finally unsuccessful search for identity – sexual, artistic and just plain human. In *Kerouac – I.E.!*, Aylesworth continued to explore the terrifying country he'd entered with *The Matador Club*: the connection between sex and love in relationships among men.

Aylesworth did not try to prove that Kerouac was gay. He did, however, sug-

gest that Kerouac loved fellow Beat writer Neal Cassady. Kerouac's failure to integrate that love and all it implied poisoned Kerouac's relationships with himself and others, and therein, at least in part, lies his tragedy.

Aylesworth staged and performed his work in a brilliant style that demanded nearly as much of audiences as it did of him and partner Newton. Zipping in and out of characterizations of Beat writers Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and others, Newton played the guitar almost throughout the show. Aylesworth played Kerouac with blinding energy, his body and voice expressing harshly contrasting emotional states in lightning quick succession. Occasionally, audiences felt like ducking to avoid the verbal shrapnel.

Aylesworth's work is neither safe nor easy. He is one of the most exciting theater artists currently working in the Bay Area.

– Bernard Spunberg