

**UP ABOVE THE WORLD:**  
**BRENDAN BERNHARD**  
**ON PAUL BOWLES**

**RIVER AFFRONT:**  
**HOWARD BLUME ON**  
**THE CHINATOWN YARDS**

**ALL ABOUT WOMEN:**  
**ELLA TAYLOR ON**  
**ALMODOVAR'S MOTHER**

# LA WEEKLY

## P I C K O F T H E W E E K

**RESA FANTASTIKT MYSTISK** In this production, co-written by Carolyn Almos, Matt Almos, Jon Beauregard, Joel Marshall, Todd Merrill, Katherine Noon, Victor Ortado, Laura Otis and Selina Smith, nothing is quite what it appears to be, so it's difficult to review without giving the game away. The program supplies an earnest biography of the writer, 19th-century Swedish playwright Lars Mattsun, author of *Whether Wind Withers You* and *The Toothless Otter*. Things look grim when director-adaptor-choreographer Todd Merrill emerges to deliver a slide-lecture on Mattsun's life and works. At first Merrill seems to be a fatuous underhead, but it's soon apparent that he's performing a superb deadpan send-up of directors who suffer from delusions of grandeur, academic pedantry and arty pretentiousness. The play itself is a reductio ad absurdum of German-Nordic expressionism, suggesting a loony collaboration between Strindberg and the Brothers Grimm. Painter Philip (Victor Ortado), tormented by artistic ambition, and a lack of both funds and talent, is about to marry Mariah (Selina Smith), who suffers from a bizarre unnamed affliction. A Mysterious Child (Laura Otis) appears to conduct him on a fantastic journey, where he encounters allegorical cats, whores, toredors, gardeners and generals. The piece ruthlessly skewers theatrical vanity, incompetence and bogus intellectuality. Though the joke is sometimes heavy-handed, it's also clever, erudite and often laugh-out-loud funny. Burgers of Hamm and the Ghost Road Company at Theater of NOTE, 1517 Cahuenga Blvd., Hlywd.; Mon.-Tues., 9 p.m.; thru Dec. 14. (323) 856-8611.

—Neal Weaver

We also recommend: *All Alone Together: Solos in Harmony II*, *Amadeus*, *Bad Seed*, *The Balcony*, *Behind the Counter With Mussolini*, *Bitter Women*, *Break of Day*, *The Comic Ozzies*, *Crime Scene*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Debt*, *Dralion*, *Eight Ways To Meet Your Neighbor*, *The Fantasticks*, *The Fever*, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, *The Greeks*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *The J. Keith van Straaten Show*, *Jack and Jill*, *The Late Movie*, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *Light Up the Sky*, *Lust and Lunacy*, *Evening Blue*, *Marry Me a Little*, *The Memorandum*, *Miss Coco Peru's Universe*, *Mr. Allen Mr. Allen*, *The 1940s Radio Hour*, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, *Nosferatu*, *Old Sins Long Shadows*, *Opening Night: The Improvised Musical*, *Reefer Madness!*, *Refugees*, *Relationships in the '90s*, *Renaissance Geek*, *The Rudy Coby Show*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Sicilian Bachelor*, *Spike Heels*, *Sunday 2: Electric Boogaloo*, *The Swan*, *Sweetheart*, *Talk About Money*, *Terminal*, *Theater Hell*, *Three*, *Trashers*, *You Bet Your Honkey*, *You Can't Take It With You*.

# Theater in L.A.

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PICK OF THE WEEK!  
 —LA Weekly

DON'T MISS this opportunity to experience the glory that is Mattsun!  
 —Los Angeles Times

CRITIC'S PICK!  
 —Back Stage West

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the recently unearthed masterpiece by Swedish Playwright/Provocateur LARS MATTSUN

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