

LAWEEKLY

CALENDAR

PERFORMANCE PICK OF THE WEEK

THE THEATERWORKER'S PROJECT

The TheatreWorker's Project is a rare bird: a collective that actually succeeds in mixing ideology with artistry. Headed by Susan Franklin Tanner, this mutable ensemble of local actors, workers and others has created several theater pieces based on issues of the day, such as labor conditions in the local steel and shipbuilding industries. In so doing, they cast their lot with a movement known as documentary theater, the most effective American political theater during the Reagan-Bush age. Reborn from the '20s and Piscatorian origins, documentary theater also owes a considerable debt to the WPA/Federal Theater Project's Living Newspaper. Mixing headlines with fictionalized scenarios, the genre attempts to make topical issues hit home with its media-jaded audience. The current TheatreWorker's outing takes on an issue right out of Tanner's own life. The subject is babymaking, or the lack thereof, as "Journey to Singapore: The Infertility Play" takes an often-humorous look at the trials and tribulations experienced by Tanner and her husband during their own four-year quest to have a child. Weaving Tanner's autobiographical material with the stories of other infertile couples and their doctors across the country, the piece shows the cross-class and cross-race dimensions of this largely undiscussed epidemic. An optimistic counterpoint to the text is that Tanner, performing in a very visibly pregnant state, is due to give birth shortly after the play closes. The second act of "Journey to Singapore" is a discussion with audience — a familiar feature of TheaterWorker's Project performances. The ensemble includes Tanner, John Achorn, Jay Loudon and Paunita Nichols, with sound by Scott Frazier. It is written by Tanner and Rob Sullivan and directed by Victoria Ann-Lewis. The TheaterWorker's Project at Highways, 1651 18th St., Santa Monica; Thurs.-Sat., Sept. 27-29, 8:30 p.m. (213) 453-1755.

—Jan Breslauer