

March 13, 2013

# theater

## Taking a whack at the book racket



Richard Hollis is a publisher who doesn't read books and Karis Danish is his editor in the comedy "Hit-Lit" at Queens Theatre.

### 'Hit-Lit' aims to slay theatergoers with killer laughs

BY STEVE PARKS  
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The F word in the new farce by Robert Wuhl (HBO's "Arli\$\$," "Assume the Position") is one we can print in a family newspaper. Fiction. Some people would hire a hit man before they'd read make-believe. Too hard to market. That's the premise of "Hit-Lit," making its world premiere at Queens Theatre. Think chick-lit with murderers-for-hire.

Barnaby Pfatt (pronounce the P), a publisher of box calendars, could give a hoot about literature. ("Read? I'm in publishing!") Richard Hollis plays Barnaby with manic stroking of his tortured ego.

His accomplice/editor, Phoebe, starved for romance (in literature and life), stumbles on what appears to be a murder. Karis Danish presents a bright-girl-next-door Phoebe — an inevitable match for the hit man she hires to write a first-person bestseller about his career. Adam Harrington's clean-cut killer delivers one-liners like well-aimed bullets. His co-conspirator (incorrigible Greg Cote) and Phoebe's assistant (Markita Prescott's sex-kitten Island girl) add to the comic-book cast of misfits caricatured in Thomas Bayne's Pop Art backdrops.

"Hit-Lit," wickedly smart fun as codirected by Wuhl and Steven Wallace, is ripe for a downtown run, where a hipster audience might inspire further hilarity. Maybe a shot at Broadway, too.



Monologues and vignettes make up "Motherhood Out Loud," with Kasia Klimiuk, left, and Barbara Jo Howard.

### 'Motherhood Out Loud'

The monologues and "fugues" — snappy vignettes — that make up "Motherhood Out Loud" at Center Stage cover the mama gamut from delivery room to dotage.

Among the funniest are Marco Pennette's "If We're Using a Surrogate, How Come I'm the One with Morning Sickness?," enacted by Adam Fronc with delicious irony. Barbara Jo Howard as the mom driving her autistic son to and from his first date in Claire LaZebnick's "Michael's

**WHAT** "Hit-Lit"  
**WHEN | WHERE** 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. today, 7:30 p.m. tomorrow and Friday, 2 and 8 p.m. Saturday, 3 p.m. Sunday, Queens Theatre, Flushing Meadows Corona Park  
**INFO** \$25-\$49; queenstheatre.org, 718-760-0064

**WHAT** "Motherhood Out Loud"  
**WHEN | WHERE** 7:30 p.m. tomorrow, 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 2:30 p.m. Sunday through March 24, Center Stage, Levitts Center for the Arts, 25 Pond Lane, Southampton  
**TICKETS** \$12-\$22; scc-arts.org, 631-287-4377

Date" rides an emotional surfboard, while Dan Becker in David Cale's "Elizabeth" confronts an elder mom's dementia with touching denial. Susan Wojcik may have you in tears over her cross-dressing boy in Michele Lowe's "Queen Esther." Theresa Rebeck's "Baby Bird" with Josephine Wallace touches on the impertinence of strangers commenting on an adopted Chinese daughter. Annie Weisman's miracle-of-birth ode, "My Baby," is delivered with wonder by Valerie DiLorenzo.

Consider "Out Loud" an early Mother's Day gift from director Michael Disher.