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## **'Rumors' stirring for Stanford's Ram's Head**

[Jordan Hart](#)



October 29th, 2010 by Jordan Hart



L-R: Tyler Fitzgerald '13, Sarah Grandin '11, and John Steinbach '13 star in "Rumors," which opened Thursday, Oct. 28 and runs through Saturday, Oct. 30 in Pigott Theater. (MICHAEL ROONEY/The Stanford Daily)

Neil Simon's farce "**Rumors**" tells the story of one night in the lives of four different couples that are attending the 10th anniversary party of their friends Charlie and Myra. It begins with Chris and Ken, who arrive at the party only to discover Charlie with a bullet hole in his ear and Myra nowhere in sight, causing them to think that Charlie had attempted suicide. As the night unfolds and the other three couples begin to arrive, the situation gets increasingly ridiculous as the two try to hide the truth of what is going on from each set of new arrivals. In a tale involving a trip to Japan to cure a sickly Chinese woman, a PBS special on Hitler and an exploding can of shaving cream, those who know what happened to Chris spend the night trying to keep it from the others, because given their upper class status, they are concerned for the potential repercussions an attempted suicide and the concealing of an attempted suicide might have for them.

This show, which originally opened in New York in the 1980s, has been revived by Ram's Head Theatrical Society for Stanford audiences. Founded in 1911, Ram's Head is Stanford's second-oldest student group, and largest performing arts group on campus, and is best known for the production of the Gaieties show during Big Game Week. Each year, Ram's Head gives almost 120 students the chance to sing, dance, act, direct, produce and much more, for their annual audience of over 6,000 people.

In addition to their three traditional performances (Gaieties, winter one-acts, and a spring musical), this year the group has added "Rumors" to their repertoire as well.

“Ram’s Head put out a notice that they were looking to do a fourth show, so we came together and thought, what was this campus looking for in theater that they weren’t getting?” said director Brendon Martin ’13. Together with producer Paul Brownlee ’12 (who is on the Board of Directors for Ram’s Head) and a small cast and crew, Martin and his team have brought to Stanford a piece of classical comedy.

Involving a traditional box set and ordinary (yet well-made and appropriately chosen) costumes, the simplicity of the set and background details really emphasized the play itself. The evening of the characters becomes increasingly more hysterical as the show goes on, and as such, having a somewhat basic set really allows the audience to focus on the plot, instead of getting distracted by elaborate costume changes or constantly-changing sets.

For many of the actors and actresses involved in the production, this was their first farce. Sarah Grandin ’11, who played the role of Claire, said that although this type of play was new to her, it was nonetheless “really fun to just throw myself into a piece of straight classic, traditional theater.”

Even more impressive is the fact that the show was put together in just a little over a month. Tyler Fitzgerald ’13, who played Grandin’s husband Ken, said, “the rehearsal process was only a month long, so we’ve had four weeks with this show...it’s amazing to see something come together, in week one the show pretty much existed already.”

Brownlee said that he “wanted to produce something that was entertaining and funny,” and with the help of the actors and production team, he and Martin have certainly done so.

“Rumors” is showing in Pigott Theater at 8 p.m. from Thursday through Saturday, including a matinee show at 4 p.m. on Saturday. Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students.

 [Neil Simon](#), [Ram's Head](#), [Rumors](#), [theater](#)

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