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## SIMON'S "PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE" OPENS SEASON



WALNUT CREEK: Diablo Actors' Ensemble begins its second season at its Locust Street theater with an all-to-relevant play "The Prisoner of Second Avenue." The Neil Simon comedy runs June 5 - 27.

With the current state of today's economy, Simon's comedy takes on new meaning as we follow the nervous breakdown and ultimate redemption of a middle-aged ad executive attempting to cope in a world gone mad. It's New York City in the early 1970s, and financial problems, record crime rates, garbage strikes, and more beset the Big Apple. Mel and Edna struggle with noisy neighbors, faulty plumbing, and a heat wave until the loss of his job sends Mel over the edge. In true Simon fashion, these serious subjects are mixed with liberal doses of humor as Mel and Edna deal with Mel's overly protective sisters and older brother.

Marilyn Langbehn directs with Rich Aiello as Mel and Trish Tillman as Edna. Sally Hogarty, Loretta Janca, and Barbara Halperin-Jacobs portray the sisters with Bill Clemente as Mel's brother. A veteran director and actor, the "Contra Costa

Times" named Langbehn's production of "Driving Miss Daisy" one of 2007's "Top Ten Bay Area Productions." "This is really a transitional play for Simon," says Langbehn. "It has his wonderful comic rhythm, but it also deals with some pretty serious subjects. The actors have to walk a fine line between comedy and drama."

▭ "Prisoner of Second Avenue"

▭ plays Thursdays - Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Thursday performances are special \$10 ticket nights. Ticket prices for Fridays - Sundays range from \$22 (senior/students) to \$25 (general).

▭ Diablo Actors' Ensemble Theatre, 1345 Locust Street, Walnut Creek

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