

PacificSun

Stage

'PICTURES FROM HOME'

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Photo by Chris Hardy

PIC (From left) Victor Talmadge, Susan Koozin and Daniel Cantor appear in Marin Theatre's 'Pictures from Home,' beginning May 7.

Snapshots

Larry Sultan's photo memoir onstage

BY BEULAH F. VEGA

LARRY SULTAN was an internationally recognized artist with strong ties to Northern California. A Bay Area resident for 20 years, he was living in Greenbrae at the time of his death in 2009.

His final project, *Homeland*, used day laborers in such places as Antioch and San Rafael as models to tell a story about being misplaced.

"Larry Sultan was a genius artist who told stories through both photos and words," says another Bay Area legend, Jonathan Moscone, who is directing *Pictures from Home*, Sharr White's adaptation of Sultan's same-titled book. The Marin Theatre production opens in Mill Valley on May 7 and runs through May 31.

Sultan's *Pictures from Home* chronicles a decade's worth of work in which he dug through his own family archives. It features numerous photos of his parents in their retirement years along with archival photos and videos from his youth with them.

"It's about love. The complicated nature of love. The messiness of love between parents and their children,

between each other, and all the messy, complicated, beautiful reality of it. It's also about how art has the capacity to capture that love," says Moscone of the book and the staged adaptation.

"I love that Sultan is trying to use art to figure something out," Moscone continues. "He hasn't created art that is figured out; he is using his own photos to try and find an answer. We (artists) don't do this work because we know what everything means. We do this as a journey of discovery."

So what will audiences discover at this show? Moscone describes it as a "ride." There is no overarching tone. There is comedy, tragedy and complexity and often in the same sentence.

It's also an interesting work because the show's subject is a contemporary artist. "Larry's widow has been involved," Moscone says. "She has been really generous with her time and her memories. She has been the greatest ally and advisor."

When asked how this sort of show differs from a more traditional biopic play, Moscone is quick to answer: "The parents tell a different story than Larry does in the script, which itself is Sharr's interpretation of the events. And Larry's widow tells yet another version of the same events. It's interesting because you start to wonder whose story is true, and you learn that you have to accept that they are *all* true interpretations of the events."

'Pictures from Home' runs May 7 through 31 at Marin Theatre, 397 Miller Ave., Mill Valley. Tues-Sat, 7:30pm; Sat & Sun, 2pm. \$15-\$75. 415.388.5208. marintheatre.org.