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◆ **Vivien: The Triumph and Madness of Vivien Leigh** *Magic Theatre, Fort Mason Center, Marina at Laguna; 441-3687. Wed-Sat, 8:30pm; Sun, 2:30pm. Through Oct 7.* The clunky title *Vivien: The Triumph and Madness of Vivien Leigh* isn't promising, but Rick Foster's solo play, starring Janis Stevens, turns out to be a pleasant surprise. The structure is standard monodrama fare: manic, tubercular Leigh at the end of her life in an empty theater, recounting her ups and downs. But Foster's writing is artful and perceptive, dodging many of the clichés of the form and eloquently dramatizing Leigh's passion, intelligence, and acuity, as well as the destructive tragedy of her mental illness. Foster is particularly strong when charting the glittery but corrosive love between Leigh and Laurence Olivier and the role that relationship played in her eventual loss of balance. But the evening belongs to the masterful Stevens. She has Leigh's arched eyebrow and kittenish smile down cold, but thankfully she aims for evocation rather than imitation and quickly compels our interest far beyond the level of tabloid biography. Director Barbara Bosch keeps things simple and focused, and Stevens and Foster capture a talent whose brief flight hit some thrilling highs and sobering lows. (Rosenstein)