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and I started having this sort of epileptic fit in the audience. I was crying and screaming: I was really euphoric because I understood how things could be simultaneously tragic and comic and so alive and so real. After that I understood Chekhov... and I went on to write Crimes of the Heart, which is loosely based on Three Sisters... Beth Henley I wanted to open with this quotation from the playwright which the WTP has featured in the program for Crimes of the Heart because I think that it provides an important insight into her intent and the structure of the play. I wish that someone had whispered the name "Chekhov" in my ear before I went to see and review Terence McNally's *Love! Valour! Compassion!* earlier this season, and so I wanted to be sure to whisper it in your ear here and now, especially since this quote provides such a clear link between his work and this one. Now if Chekhov conjures up hours of dour Russian angst in your mind, rest assured that, while Beth Henley's plays is clearly Chekhovian in style, she is not at all dour. Her plays should be enjoyed for the same reason that Chekhov's should be: they should be enjoyed for the way in which they show us how to live. Williamstown directoral debut, has assembled an outstanding cast and provided them with a structure and space in which to present extraordinarily honest performances. The play centers on a day in the life of the McGrath sisters of Hazlehurst, Mississippi in the fall of 1974. It is Lenny (Jennifer Dundas) 30th birthday and her cousin Chick Boyle (Kali Roche) is giving her a hard time. Lenny, the oldest of the McGrath girls, is unmarried and lives with and cares for her elderly grandfather, who is in the hospital all during the action of the play. Her youngest sister Babe (Lily Rabe) has just been arrested and accused of shooting her husband in the stomach, a crime to which Babe freely admits. The middle sister Meg (Sarah Paulson), who everyone thinks has been on the road with a successful singing career, returns to help Lenny and Babe cope with the crisis. Babe is also aided by a young lawyer, Barnette Lloyd (Chandler Williams) with an ax to grind against her husband. Meg spends an evening with Doc Porter (Patch Darragh), an old flame who she convinced to ride out Hurricane Camille with her five years earlier, a decision that led to his becoming permanently disabled and abandoning his ambitions to become a doctor. This is not the first crisis that the sisters have had to face together. Their father abandoned the family and their mother hung herself (and the cat) in the basement. The entire close-knit community considers the McGraths a little odd, and they are right. The McGraths are odd, but in a wonderfully human and endearing manner. Like Chekhov Henley has the ability to create characters you feel you know already, dopplegangers of friends or relatives you deal with all the time. As I said before, this is a play about a family, and a family is a place where you should be able to find out how to live. The play is a comedy, but it is a comedy that comes of good stock, but that alone does not account for the presence and talent she displays. From her joyous entrance to the final tableau Rabe has command of the stage. Rabe and Paulson have worked together before, in the 2005 off-Broadway production of *Laura Wade*. Colden Tan Heng. They play well together and they look like sisters. Paulson is cast as the "trashy" sister, the one who found their mother hanged. Her Meg is all nervous energy and unapologetic misbehavior. 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