

*The New Yorker*

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## Swimming With Watermelons

April 15th, 2002

A musical, performed by four women, about a romance in occupied Japan between a G.I. and a Japanese woman. The songs are standards of the era, and the staging niftily combines elements of Broadway and traditional Japanese theatre; the result is both truly funny and deeply moving. The show was written and directed by Diane Paulus and Randy Weiner and is based on the true story of Ms. Paulus's parents. But instead of sappiness, the audience gets a clear-eyed look at the prejudice such a couple might have faced, together with a clearly justified belief in the power of true love to overcome all — in the best "Guys and Dolls" fashion. Several of the roles are recognizable types, but the cast — three of whom play two roles apiece (a testament to the ingenuity of the costume designer, Ilona Somogyi) — makes all of the characters fully human as well. It's a delight, beginning to end. (Vineyard, 108 E 15th St. 353-0303. Closes April 21.)