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NOVEMBER 7-8-13-14-15-21-22  
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## THEATRE

# Three Guys Naked...

Review by  
Deborah McGee

*Three Guys Naked From the Waist Down* has burst upon the Eugene theater scene, spiriting deserved applause from a diverse crowd.

Newcomer from Portland Eric Hadley is the star, whose genius, manic-depressive style akin to Belushi/Robin Williams already seems much appreciated here. With the face and figure of one fully enjoying life, Hadley is absolutely off-the-wall, a clown capable of reaching us way inside. We gasp at his death-defying antics, such as when he clammers upon the restaurant's banisters, then leaps through the air onto stage. He can pull off such crazy stunts as walking around with pencils sticking out both ears, bemoaning a terrible headache. It would be hard to resist being upstaged by his charm.

Richard Gray shows his usual brilliance of talent. Last year he surprised us in his portrayal of a tragic child molester in *Short Eyes* at the U of O. Then he wowed us with his piano artistry in *Pump Boys & Dinettes*, showed powerful verbal skills in *Tomfoolery*, and played Rusty Charlie in *Guys & Dolls*. In *Three Guys Naked* he plays Ted Klausterman, one of a trio of stand-up comics who evolve into a popular act best described as Three Stooges Meet Devine. Gray was individually funniest Saturday when portraying a Valley Girl stewardess. His gestures of coyishly stroking his bangs, plucking fastidiously at his nails and staccato-swaying his hips had the house in stitches.

The play's funniest scene is when the men appear in drag, an act bordering on cliché in art and media circles. It had to be original to be enjoyable, and it was the peek of the show. Yes I lost it. By the way, be forewarned that if the play's title offends you, strike it off your list of things to do. Four letter words abound; both heterosexual and homosexual sex are spoofed and explored upon stage.

Director Joe Zingo lives up to his name with his energetic direction of *Three Guys Naked*. Enrique Arias, the third comic, is at his deadpan funniest during the drag scene. With his rugged good

looks, chiselled face and serious "mis" demeanor, he's a nice balance to Hadley's flights of fantasy. I wish he would lighten up a little more, though, to balance his considerable intensity. Arias delivered a fine performance last year, too, as Paco, also of *Short Eyes*.

A sideline of Mainstage Theatre/Jim Roberts Productions, Mainstage Cabaret already is in high gear in its second year devoted to reviving Eugene's cabaret scene. This year began last month with a reprise of their popular *Tomfoolery*, and Seymour's Restaurant in downtown makes a perfect home for the enterprise. At the moment they seem to be trying to balance the food vs. entertainment bill. Waitresses walk faster than anyone ever walks in Eugene. The play started late, but was worth the wait, for everyone was served who ordered before the 8:30 kitchen cut-off. Full dinners and snacks are available, and beer, wine and cocktails even during intermission.

*Three Guys Naked* is 80's humor, poking fun at most recent decades from an 80's perspective. It's a masterpiece mixture of boundless hilarity and nuclear age madness, appropriate artistically as well as politically. Topics broached are similar to Tom Lehrer's *Tomfoolery*, but lyricist Jerry Colker shows more dancing-on-the-brink panic and flavor.

It's a hit; it's a show. It's a good ROI on your entertainment dollar. Go early if you want a good seat and/or plan on indulging.

See calendar or last week's cover for details.

## Foxfire

Review by Dianne Weaver

Oregon Repertory Theatre opens another season with *Foxfire*, a contemporary play written by Susan Cooper and Hume Cronyn. It's a heartwarming story of an Appalachian family torn between the old ways and the new, between roots which have grown deep and the winds of change.

The setting is the old Stoney Lonesome, a tract of land in the Appalachian Mountains which has been in the Nations family since Hector's great-grandfather broke ground. The whole play takes place at the old shack which has been home for Hector (Bob Friedman) and Annie (Janet Stieger Carr) Nations and their children for decades. It is the land which holds their hearts and where they have deep roots.

Even their son Dillard (John Leistner), who left home several years ago to sing and play his guitar for a living, still feels the magic of the place. It brings back many memories for him and he longs for that sense of rootedness he left when "his feet took to walkin'" (he sings a beautifully melancholy song in reminiscence of his youth).

It is as much Dillard's unresolved feelings about his family and its roots which bring him back as it is his desire to have his mother come home with him. And will Annie Nations be able to pull up those roots to live with the only family she has left—her son and her grandchildren?

For a woman who has not left the mountains for years nor ven-

ured into society much in her entire life, this is a scary proposal. About as scary as when her husband Hector proposed to her many years ago.

We see Annie get up from her rocking chair on the porch and as she unbraids her hair and stands tall she becomes the youthful girl who was afraid of Hector and reluctant to marry him. Then we see the young girl become an old woman again as Annie drifts back to the present.

Janet Stieger Carr is as believable as the old Annie as she is as a young woman being kissed for the first time. Her performance as Annie is done with dignity and compassion, warmth and wit.

In many ways, the play is about Annie's emancipation, from dwelling on past memories and from Hector. When faced with the choice to stay or to go with Dillard, Annie tells Hector she must make this decision on her own.

When she decides to go to her son's concert thirty miles away, it is a decision made on her own against Hector's wishes. She has not been away from Stony Lonesome for five years or more. She is impressed by what her son does.

And so is the audience. The musicians who back up Dillard are Eugene's best country trio, Fiddlin' Sue, Uncle T and Johnny. The songs were written by the play's authors and Jonathon Holtzman. One of them is dedicated to Hector, "Sweet Talkin' Man," which paints a picture of Hector as someone who helped his family survive by always getting the better deal in a trade with his neighbors.

A real estate agent, Prince Carpenter (Robert Boyt Foster), is a catalyst to Annie's process of trying to decide whether to move to the city. He comes along just before Dillard and Holly Burrell (Julie Golden), a school teacher who has returned to the area to stay, show up. He offers Annie a lot of money for the land. It isn't the first time he has made the offer.

Prince has an opportunity to talk to Dillard and tries to convince Dillard that he should try to get Annie to live with him. Prince has pushed the right button. That's exactly what Dillard has been thinking.

However, Dillard is torn by the realization that these roots really mean something. And Holly reinforces Annie's right to stay.

Dillard understands only too well how Annie could be attached and not want to leave. Ever since he left home to become a guitar pickin' country singer he has felt that something was missing in his life. He has many feelings to resolve as he wanders into the past.

As the play looks into the past, we share in many humorous, anecdotal stories of life in Appalachia. These stories and the folklore revealed in them reflect the origins of the play—the *Foxfire* series of books which record the ways and beliefs of the Appalachian people.

Melina Neal, returning to Oregon Repertory Theatre after a busy four-year absence, has done an excellent job of directing *Foxfire*. The positive messages of the play are burned into my memory. It was an affirmation of life.

*Foxfire* has three more performances this week. It can be seen at the Soreng Theatre of the Hult Center on Thursday the 13th, Friday the 14th and Saturday the 15th at 7:30 pm. It is a play the whole family will enjoy.

# Hurly Burly

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