

Arts and entertainment

Bowie's rock show descends on Portland

By Carolyn Lamberson
Of the Emerald

David Bowie will bring a theatrical, multi-million dollar show to the Portland Civic Stadium on Friday as part of his 100-date "Glass Spiders World Tour."

The tour, which began its American leg in Philadelphia on July 30, has been attracting attention for its elaborate stage set up. The set features two giant video screens, a huge spider suspended from the top of the stage from which Bowie descends. According to Lane Richards, of Gail Browne Public Relations in San Francisco, Bowie actually has two of the sets, and they "leapfrog" across the country allowing Bowie to be playing one date while the stage is being set for the next show.

The set-up in Portland began Tuesday and has continued on schedule, Pacific Concerts representative Greg Herreman said. There are an average of 60 people a day working on building the stage and setting

up the lighting and sound systems, he added.

The stadium will hold about 27,000 concert-goers. As of Tuesday, ticket sales for the show were approximately 19,500, said Dave Parrow, a stadium admissions supervisor.

"We have been selling about 500 tickets a day between all outlets," he said. He expects a crowd of about 21,000, he added.

A Portland city ordinance mandates outdoor concerts in Portland must be completed by 10 p.m. However, a variance has been approved by the City Council, and the show will go until 11 p.m., Parrow said.

Bowie will be joined on stage by former school chum Peter Frampton on lead guitar in Bowie's first tour since the "Serious Moonlight" shows of a few years ago. The choreography was designed by Bowie and singer/dancer Toni Basil. The five dancers who flank Bowie during the performance are known as "Thru the Flames," and also descend from

the belly of the huge spider, according to information supplied by the Browne agency.

Bowie's set lasts approximately two hours and includes material from his latest album, "Never Let Me Down" as well as songs from "Let's Dance," "Hereos," "The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars" and "Space Oddity" to name a few.

Tickets are still available at Portland-area ticket outlets for \$22.50, with the show beginning at 6:30 p.m. The opening band is British trio Duran Duran, who have been headlining their own tour in the United States, Europe and Asia for several months. Duran Duran has teamed with Bowie for his shows in Portland, Vancouver, B.C., and other West Coast locations.

Duran Duran are touring in support of their most recent album, "Notorious." This is their first tour since 1984 and the loss of guitarist Andy Taylor and drummer Roger Taylor.

Frears' film highlights life of playwright

By Carolyn Lamberson
Of the Emerald

"Prick Up Your Ears," the latest film from "My Beautiful Laundrette" director Stephen Frears is an intelligent study of the life and death of '60s playwright Joe Orton.

Orton authored plays such as "Loot" and "Entertaining Mr. Sloane" before he was hammered to death by his companion/lover Kenneth Halliwell in 1967. Halliwell committed suicide with sleeping pills immediately following the murder.

Gary Oldman plays Orton with a zealotry that easily matches his performance as late-Sex Pistol Sid Vicious in the Alex Cox film, "Sid and Nancy." The tormented, insecure Halliwell is played with equal talent by Alfred Molina, a British stand-up comedian and Shakespearean actor.

"Prick Up Your Ears" has all the earmarks of a British film: the gloominess of London, dry humor, and a subject matter that American audiences may wince at. Frears, as in "Laundrette,"

takes stereotypical homosexuality out of the back room and places it in the forefront of consciousness. And what makes the film more interesting is the fact it takes place during a time when homosexual activity was illegal and punishable by a prison term.

However, this film is not blatant in its visual presentation of Orton and Halliwell's relationship. In the beginning, they have a touching relationship. Orton is an 18-year-old semi-literate student at a dramatic-arts school when he and Halliwell meet. Halliwell is a well-read 25-year-old who sets out to educate Orton in literature, writing and the homosexual lifestyle.

They begin as collaborators on a novel, but in the end it is Orton who achieves success. This strikes a discord within the relationship as it shifts from an equal partnership to a husband/wife scenario, with wife-figure Halliwell feeling left out and envious.

Orton takes his success and a newfound promiscuity by the

horns. However, his attempts to bring Halliwell into this world fail, causing further discontent in the relationship.

The events are shown in flashbacks as Orton's agent Peggy Ramsay (Vanessa Redgrave) talks to biographer John Lahr (Wallace Shawn). The movie is based on Lahr's biography of the same name.

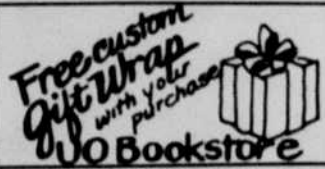
Redgrave gives a fine performance as the powerful London theatrical agent and friend of the chameleon playwright. Shawn, perhaps best remembered for his role in "My Dinner With Andre," and the only non-Brit in the film, also performs solidly as a writer genuinely curious about the life of the controversial and talented Orton.

But it is Oldman and Molina who shine in this production. Both give their characters spark, emotion and make them completely believable as humans. Frears' direction provides an intense, funny, touching portrait of the life span of a relationship.

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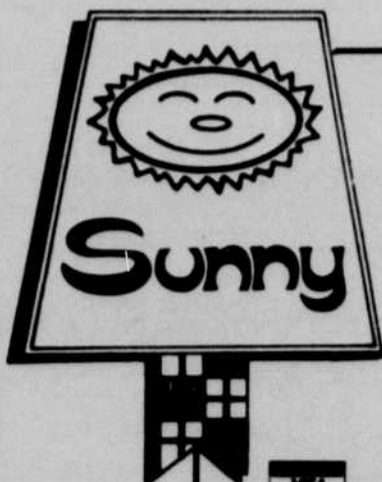
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