

ENCORE!

The Oregon Daily Emerald's Entertainment Guide

'Intimacies' portrays unknown AIDS victims

By Layne Lakefish
Encore Reporter

There's more to AIDS than what America sees on the news and reads about in *Time* magazine. Hence, *Intimacies*, a play by Michael Kearns, was born, depicting the lives of six different AIDS victims — the victims that don't make the headlines.

Intimacies, yet another facet of perspective during AIDS Information Month (AIM), will be performed Jan. 25 at 8 p.m. in the EMU's Ben Linder Room. The show is free and sponsored by the EMU Cultural Forum.

This is a tale of the untold, written by and performed wholly by Kearns. It steers clear of the stereotypical AIDS victim, portraying the lives of six unheard victims. Kearns saw how easy it was for a white gay man to be heard, and this is a story giving the other victims the time they deserve to tell their story.

Using a red scarf as his only prop, Kearns brings his charac-

ters to life. With only the scarf, Kearns dedicates the just-over-an-hour show to the victims, rather than to the theatrics. It's a story of victims.

Denny, a former Disco Queen, is now hospitalized and suffering from dementia (AIDS-related memory loss); Big Red is a middle-aged black female prostitute; Patrick, an accountant at Disney, thinks he's too beautiful to be dying and can't cope; Rusty, a teen-age junkie, always looked for love in the wrong places; Mary, who gets AIDS through a blood transfusion, thinks it's the Lord's punishment; and Phoenix, who lives under the Hollywood freeway, is a drug addict suffering from AIDS-related blindness.

"These are the AIDS cases we don't see on CNN and they deserve to be seen and to be humanized," Kearns said.

Intimacies takes the science out of AIDS and leaves the humanity of the victims as the center of the show. "AIDS doesn't render a good person



Photo by Courtesy photo

Actor Michael Kearns, using a red scarf as his only prop, will portray the lives of six different AIDS victims in his production *Intimacies*. The performance, part of AIDS Information Month, is Jan. 25 at 8 p.m. in the EMU's Ben Linder Room.

evil or an evil person good," he said. "The play looks at AIDS as a human condition instead of a disease. This humanity transcends the importance of having the disease."

By stripping away the statistics and the objectivity, Kearns' monologues do more than simply tell the victims' stories. They tell society's story regarding the handling of AIDS and

they confront society.

"Because I'm gay and because I've lost a lot of friends to AIDS, I've noticed a lack of understanding and a lack of compassion," he said.


By knocking down the stereotypical misconceptions, Kearns hopes the play will leave the audience thinking about AIDS and how they themselves perceive the disease

and its victims.

"I would like to shake people up and force them to look at their prejudices," he said. "Even though AIDS is connected in people's minds to sex, death, homosexuality and drugs, it (AIDS) is only a disease and people are people no matter what."

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