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Saturday May 26

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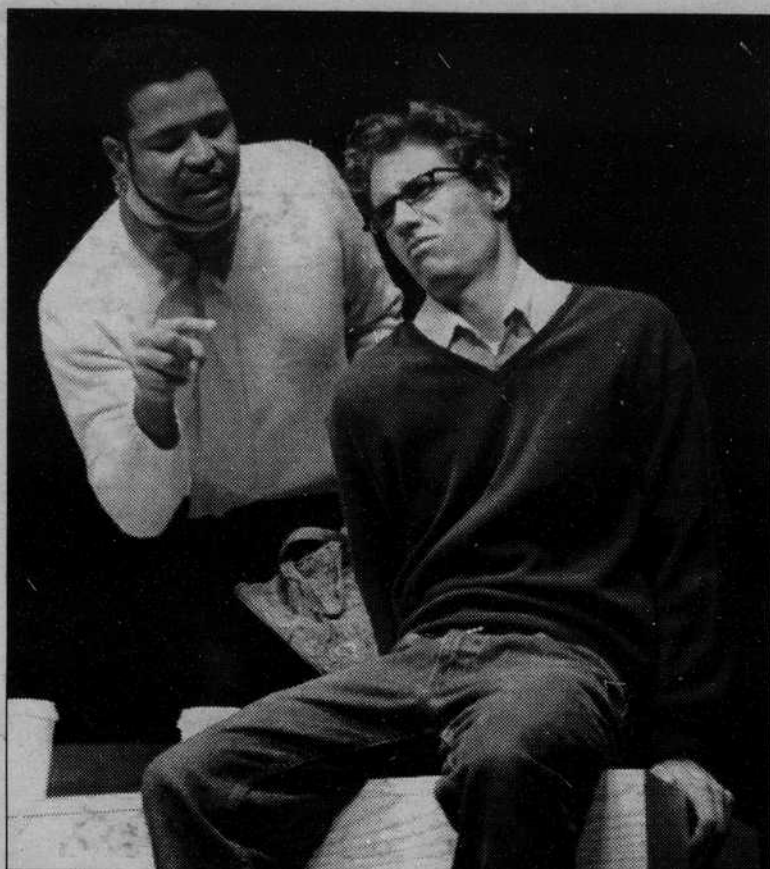
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Alberto Albuquerque's and Nate Bloch's characters argue about homosexuality and race. Tom Patterson Emerald

Angels

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production was honored in 1993 with a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award as well.

Tickets for this show are \$10 each for the general public; \$8 for University faculty and staff mem-

"This is a play for people who both think and feel."

John Schmor
director,
'Angels in America'

bers, senior citizens and non-University students; and \$5 for University students. On May 31, University students will be admitted for \$4. Curtain time for all performances is 8 p.m.

In addition, a matinee performance benefiting the HIV Alliance of Eugene will be held at 2 p.m. June 3. Tickets are \$12 for this special performance. To reserve tickets and for information, call the HIV Alliance, 342-5088.

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Depper

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as people like you or me, in everyday life," Merskin said. "In my view, comedy only perpetuates stereotypes about gays and lesbians by making the role and story line something to laugh at."

Scott Seomin, the entertainment media director for the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, seems to agree with this statement.

"The advances that have been made for lesbians and gay men on television are great in increased awareness but seem to have only gone so far in portraying more than one dimension," Seomin says on GLAAD's Web site. "How about acknowledging that a character can be defined in more context? Wearing a gay name tag should not be confused with identity."

GLAAD's Web site has some excellent resources for people with any sort of interest in how homosexuality is portrayed in the media. It includes a comprehensive list of every gay character in a lead, supporting or recurring role currently on television. The list also archives several years of television.

It was amazing to find that out of the hundreds of shows currently on television, there are only six that feature a gay character in a leading role. Only 13 feature a gay

Television shows in 2001 with a gay character in a leading or supporting role:

100 Centre St.	ER
Buffy the Vampire Slayer	Felicity
Normal, Ohio	First Years
Queer as Folk	Los Beltran
Some of My Best Friends	NYPD Blue
Will & Grace	Popular
Beggars and Choosers	South Park
Bette	Spin City
Dark Angel	Strip Mall
Dawson's Creek	

character in a supporting role (and four of these have already been canceled).

Considering the sizable chunk of the population in the United States that claims to be gay, the straight-to-gay ratio on television seems woefully misproportioned.

Hanna Persson is the event coordinator for the University's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Alliance. She agreed that homosexuals are being held captive in the sitcom world.

"For some reason, gay people, primarily gay men, are funny to people," she said. "When someone funny but more political like Ellen gets on TV, they immediately kick her off."

Persson went on to say that despite the fact that homosexuals are sometimes portrayed in a less-than-flattering light on television, some gay presence is better than

none at all.

"If you're a kid seeking homosexual representations, it's almost good that we have the ability to see them on TV, as opposed to being invisible. But it still does plant stereotypes," she said.

Can anything be done about the lack of representation and the stereotyping of gays on television? Both Merskin and Persson doubt that anything will happen very soon. Persson brought up the interesting point that advertising relies on stereotypes to sell products, and any kind of show content that challenges these stereotypes "makes it inefficient for advertisers. TV and media thrive on gender roles and stereotypes." She went on to say that in a perfect world, consumers would stop feeding revenue to the advertisers that are responsible for perpetuating stereotypes. "I don't think that's going to happen," she said with a laugh.

So it appears that gays are in a catch-22 with television. Yes, it's great that there are more gay characters, but are these representations healthy for gay culture in the long run?

Your guess is as good as mine. An interesting footnote to this story is the fact that CBS recently announced that Ellen DeGeneres will be the star of a new sitcom on its fall schedule. Can DeGeneres have as big an impact in 2001 as she did in 1997? Can she have a successful gay-themed show without stooping to tired clichés and stereotypes? Only time will tell.

Dave Depper is an entertainment reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at ddepper@gladstone.uoregon.edu.



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