

gether, and I see that happening. Softball has helped; get together, get crazy, and not worry about theater for a day.

"What used to bug me is when a show like "Evita" or "The Wiz" would come through town, people would think nothing of laying out \$20 for a ticket, and the same people would squabble about paying \$7 for a Portland show. Portlanders finally seem to be supporting their own theater. There is a real good climate for theater here. Also, there is a lot of "crossover" in the arts community in general — theater artists know musicians, musicians know painters, etc. It's a real creative place. I love it."

Then Rick Jones arrived. He talked of his producing and acting in Fugard's "Sizwe

Bansi is Dead," which led to his being offered a role in "Blood Knot" at Critical Mass. However, when various co-producers made various conflicting offers regarding payment, Rick decided to walk. He felt that he'd been largely responsible for developing an audience for Fugard in Portland, and therefore deserved a bigger slice of the pie. He decided to produce the show himself, having learned a lot from doing "Sizwe Bansi." However, he couldn't find anyplace to stage the show, and gave up the idea for several days. Then, on his birthday, he went to see a BAMM comedy show, after which members of BAMM asked him when he was going to do a show at their space. Jones thought, "Wow! What a birthday present!"

Rick Jones has been a busy actor. In one December week, he performed in two different plays each night, with director John Zagone shuttling him from the Willamette Center to Portland Civic's Blue Room. "He needed a Negro," said Jones with a grin.

Jones continued, "I've been real busy. You have to be if you want to make a living off the theater in Portland. No, 'living' is the wrong word. Surviving. An existence. It can be done here, but it is a lot of work."

By this time, the conversation has moved to Chateau L'Bamm, where the afternoon rehearsal is due to start shortly. Schulz talks about how hard it can be for an actor to pursue his craft and hold down a rent-paying, food-providing job at the same time.

"I'm just grateful for people like Tony DeMicoli at the old La Bambas. Tony was real cool about letting his employees pursue their artistic careers while working for him. I sometimes work at landscaping for Dick Celsi, and he is also real flexible." Jones adds that Larry at Starry Night is also from the same supportive mold.

Schulz says, "Places are getting better about paying their actors something, at least a stipend. Portland is a good place to work. It is getting better."

Just then everything stops when an "angel" named Tracy comes into the room and offers around a bag containing oranges, rolls, and cheese. Everyone present gratefully accepts. Ah, the way to an actor's heart...

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