

# LYSISTRATA

*and other summer things  
to do in Portland*

Portland theatre companies are getting their second wind this spring after a busy winter season. Portland Civic Theatre's current production, *Once Upon a Mattress*, a whimsical tale of true love and happiness, is rounding out PCT's regular season.

The New Rose Theatre premieres resident playwright Charles Deemer's *The Comedian in Spite of Himself* this week. The New Rose mounted Deemer's *Christmas at Juniper Tavern* last January and caught the fancy of audiences during the entire run. *Christmas at Juniper Tavern*, a sensitive look at cultural diversity, was also videotaped and shown on local television in April.

Storefront Actors Theatre's phenomenal production of *Angry Housewives* provided a milestone in Portland's theatre history by playing more than 100 performances since opening the first week in January. *Angry*

stophanes Greek classic, *Lysistrata*, through May 20th at the Wilson Center for the Performing Arts. The popular play has been rewritten by Rebecca Adams and Vana O'Brien and is set in the early sixties on an Army base in Nevada.

"Liz" and her friends are growing increasingly nervous at the nuclear testing going on at the base. When Liz's husband narrowly avoids being killed in a test, the women decide to make a stand using the only weapon available to them — abstinence. They abstain from cooking, cleaning and sex! The play is bawdy, lively and extremely funny.

*Lysistrata* is co-directed by David Beetham-Gomes and Rebecca Adams, with music by Holly Near. The cast includes Laura Paxson as Liz, Vana O'Brien, Joe Cronin, Alyson Osborn and Michael Welsh.

Performances are Friday and Saturday

Cyndy Ramsey as Lady Larken, Michael Shine as Sir Harry, Dennis Clancy as the Wizard and Dan Melvin as the Minstrel. Musical direction for the show is provided by David Kelly with choreography by Valerie Edwards.

Many moons ago, in a far-off land, princesses from neighboring kingdoms vie for the honor of marrying Prince Dauntless. Thus far, twelve have tried and failed the impossible tests which his mother, Queen Aggravain makes them take. The 13th contestant, Winnifred the Woebegone becomes the personal favorite of the Prince and other court members. But Winnifred must take the test to prove she is a "real princess." Aggravain and her Wizard devise a test in which she will have to sleep on a stack of twenty mattresses beneath which one tiny pea will be placed. Should she sleep she is not a true princess. Come and see the Portland Civic Theatre's production to find out the surprise ending.

Carol Burnett created the role of Princess Winnifred in one of the original off-Broadway productions.

Carol Steinel (Peg) sang at Wilde Oscar's last year in an original cabaret about senior citizens she co-created with John Keating. In December, 1982, Carol appeared as Meredith in Sumus Theatre's *Steambath*; and in 1981, she worked with Leigh Clarkgranville as accompanying musician and vocalist.

Sarazan James (Gracie) is presently appearing in Robin Lane's *Changing Matter*, a production of the Do Jump Dance Company. In two and a half years with the Portland Women's Theater Company, Sarazan appeared in *The Clue in the Old Bird Bath*, *When I was a Fat Woman and Other True Stories*, and *The Lydia E. Pinkham Menstrual Show*.

John Keating (Musical Director) played piano at Wilde Oscar's last year in an original cabaret about senior citizens he co-created with Carol Steinel. John played rehearsal piano for Eartha Kitt when she appeared at the Benson Hotel last year and for Leigh Clarkgranville in the early days of *Hatbox*.

Harrison Pierce (Producer and Director) previously produced *Street Theater* (June, 1983) and *A Perfect Relationship* (Oct. '82), two Doric Wilson comedies. *Dos Lesbos* is his directorial debut.

The Northwest premiere of *Dos Lesbos*. A *Play By, For, And About Perverts*, will open at Judy's, 1431 NE Broadway, on June 8. Written by Teresa Baum and Carolyn Myers, *Dos Lesbos* opened in San Francisco in 1981 and was subsequently nominated for a Cable Car Award (best theatrical production) and a Bay Area Theater Critics Award (best original dramatic script). Co-author Baum starred in the original production, which played in San Francisco for over a year. The Portland production will be the first outside the Bay Area.

*Dos Lesbos* satirizes in seven vignettes the struggles Peg and Gracie, a young lesbian couple, face as they contend with The Job, Coming Out To The Parents, Men, Meeting The In-Laws, and so on. Musical numbers



Linda Greep and Karl Beckmann in *Once Upon a Mattress*.

punctuate the scenes. Carol Steinel and Sarazan James star as Peg and Gracie. John Keating is musical director. The show is produced and directed by Harrison Pierce.

Jean-Baptiste Moliere, the famous 17th century French playwright, was highly controversial both on and offstage. His plays scandalized French society, and his "War of Comedy" with the King's own acting troupe provided gossip grist for months. Offstage, Moliere was accused of marrying his own daughter — a rumor still open to speculation.

Charles Deemer, resident playwright for The New Rose Theatre, has captured Moliere's life in his commissioned work, *The Comedian In Spite of Himself*. Deemer's focus in *Comedian*... is "the relationship between the man's personal life and his work: how each influenced the other." *Comedian*... covers Moliere's life from shortly after his marriage; through censorship and charges of sacrilege surrounding the production of "Tartuffe," to his death following his own performance in "The Imaginary Invalid."

Following a Preview performance on the 10th, *The Comedian In Spite of Himself* will open on The New Rose stage May 11, 1984 and run through June 16. Two Sunday Matinee performances of this world premiere will be held May 20 and June 3, followed by audience discussions, led by Dramaturg Richard Wiltshire and sponsored by The Oregon Committee for the Humanities.

Gary O'Brien, The New Rose Theatre Artistic Director, is Director of *Comedian*... Twig Webster appears as Moliere. Armande, Moliere's young wife, is portrayed by Jillayne Self. Madeliene, Moliere's former lover, actress and current business manager of the troupe, is played by Linda Williams Janke. Jay Randall Horenstein, winner of the 1983 Best Actor Willy Award, is LaGrange, Moliere's friend and troupe member, who narrates the play and also portrays several other characters.

*Comedian*... Costume Design is Susan L. Kelly. Lighting Design is by David Percival from the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. Scene Designer is Max Muller. Composer for all *Comedian*... music is Todd Barton from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland.

Curtain time for Thursday through Saturday performances is 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees are 2 p.m. Opening Night tickets are \$11, and all other performances are \$8.

Tickets are available through any of the six TicketLink outlets in the Portland area: Fred Meyer — Beaverton, Downtown and Washington Square. Portland 227-4080/Vancouver 206-694-1245/toll free (Oregon) 1-800-452-6278.

The New Rose Theatre presents a satellite production of James McLure's *Lone Star* at Critical Mass Theatre, 938 N.W. Everett, Port-



Jay Randall Horenstein (L) and Twig Webster in *The Comedian in Spite of Himself*.

*Housewives* will close after the May 26 performance for three weeks and will reopen on June 15 with some cast changes. The performance on Thursday, May 24, will benefit the Burnside Consortium; tickets are a \$25 donation.

*Lysistrata*. Artists Repertory Theatre's contemporary reworking of Aristophanes' Greek classic, will close next week after a successful run. *Lysistrata* features Vana O'Brien, who co-authored the adaptation.

On the horizon are two productions of special interest to the lesbian and gay community, Portland Women's Theatre Company's *Hollandia '45*, and *Dos Lesbos*, a new play directed by Harrison Pierce, whose previous efforts were well received by wide audiences.

Artists Repertory Theatre is presenting Ari-

stophanes Greek classic, *Lysistrata*, through May 20th at the Wilson Center for the Performing Arts. The popular play has been rewritten by Rebecca Adams and Vana O'Brien and is set in the early sixties on an Army base in Nevada.

*Once Upon a Mattress*, a musical take-off on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Princess and the Pea," is playing on the Portland Civic Theatre Mainstage through June 23. Performances are Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m. Two Sunday Matinees are also offered on Mother's Day, May 13 and Father's Day, June 17 at 2 p.m.

Directed by Patsy Maxson, *Once Upon a Mattress* has a cast including Gayle Millage as Princess Winnifred, Karl Beckmann as Prince Dauntless, Linda Greep as Queen Aggravain, Thom Cosgriff as King Sextimus,