

Thursday, April 17, at the Fifth Avenue Cinema, with a benefit for Phoenix Rising sponsored by Moyer Theatres and Cinecom.

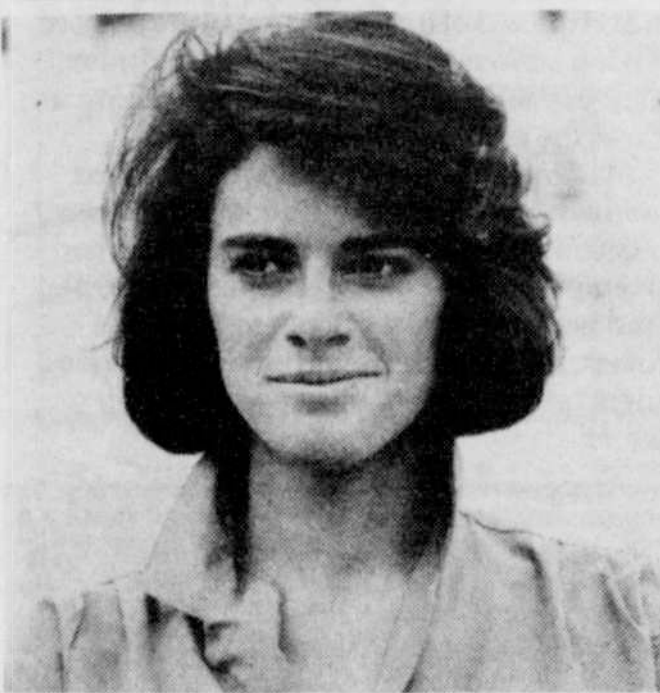
Tickets for the opening night benefit for Phoenix Rising, the Portland metro area's only gay and lesbian counseling and social service center, are \$7.00 each and are available at Turntable Mary's, Music Millenium, Just Out and Phoenix Rising. The tickets include a champagne reception at 7 p.m.

Whatever happened to "Desert Hearts"?

by Eve Sicular

When it played to two enthusiastic, packed houses in February, *Desert Hearts* should have dispelled the initial doubts of local theater bookers. The turnout at the film's run in the International Film Festival was the third highest out of 46 films, and members of the audience gave it an 8.3 rating, tying for 7th place. So here we are in April, and no sign of a Portland commercial run for this film, despite the fact that it's the hottest lesbian film ever to reach mass distribution, and a demonstrated hit. What gives?

First, let's relieve some of the suspense. *Desert Hearts* is coming back, and soon.



Patricia Charbonneau portrays Cay Rivers in *Desert Hearts*.

Both Moyer Theatres and Seven Gables (proprietors of Cinema 21, the Moviehouse and the KOIN Center) perked up to bid for it after its impressive festival showing, and by late this month or early next, one of them will be playing it again at a theater near you. At press time they're having to wait until the film's opening in NY and LA before Samuel Goldwyn Company, the distributor, will set dates for Portland.

When contacted by phone, Deitch talked about the film's potential for "crossover," the industry term for reaching a mainstream audience outside the obvious market; in this case, crossing over to straight audiences is the question. While the director was glad to hear how much the predominantly lesbian audiences here enjoyed *Desert Hearts*, she also emphasized that she intended the film to become a "communication tool" giving straights a sympathetic, appealing view of love between women. "I made the film so that anyone watching it will be rooting for the two of them to get together," she said. "I want (lesbian and gay) people to bring their straight friends to see it with them." Deitch herself considers *Desert Hearts* a 'lesbian film,' but said she would refrain from characterizing it as such in the straight press in order not to discourage straight viewers.

Whether this strategy will bring the crossover audiences, achieving raised consciousness and higher box office receipts, remains to be seen. For us in Portland, the obviously strong lesbian base of support for the film will likely have its own fortuitous effect. *Desert Hearts* at the Ninth Portland International

Film Festival, generated "the most dramatic advance ticket sales our office has ever seen," according to Kathy Clark of the Northwest Film & Video Center. "And it was a most singularly female audience." She adds, "The enormous outpouring of support for this film is really encouraging for the Film Center in terms of our plans to program a gay/lesbian film series during Gay Pride Week." Clark and various other sources estimate a lesbian share of over 90% in attendance at the Berg Swann auditorium and at the extra added show the following night at the KOIN Center. Clark was not surprised at this turnout, because "knowing how much I wanted to see it, I was sure a lot of other people felt the same."

Desert Hearts and another gay-positive, independently-produced feature film, *Parting Glances*, open in the same month here, at last.

Romanovsky and Phillips: a little campy and extremely talented

by Renee LaChance

Wandering gay troubadours Romanovsky and Phillips are on a 30-city tour that brings them to Portland on Tuesday, April 29 to promote their newest album, *Trouble in Paradise*. Ron Romanovsky and Paul Phillips are performing in a benefit concert for Phoenix Rising Foundation with Nan Collie and Kathy Fallon of Motherlode at 8 pm at the Northwest Service Center.

Romanovsky and Phillips won the hearts of fans during their last visit to Portland when they were a little crazy, a little campy and extremely talented at the Embers Ave.

Romanovsky & Phillips have been performing their original, out-of-the closet music for over three years. Known for their soaring harmonies, uproarious lyrics and magnetic stage presence, R&P have won unanimous praise from critics, gained a loyal following all over the country, and established themselves as exciting new voices in the world of gay men's music. Their first album, *I Thought You'd Be Taller!* sold thousands of copies, and their newest, *Trouble in Paradise*, promises to do the same.

Ron Romanovsky is a self-taught musician who began collecting records at the age of five, writing full-length novels at the age of 12 and writing songs at the age of 15. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, he escaped to San Francisco after a brief year as a theater major in college and began singing whenever possible. Inspired by women's music as well as a growing gay consciousness, his songs came out more and more as he did.

Paul Phillips, the son of a Baptist minister and a high-school French teacher, grew up in New Jersey and West Virginia.

Trouble in Paradise, their newest album produced by Teresa Trull, runs the gamut from love songs to klezmer, country to rock. Joining them on their album are the talents of Barbara Higbie, Darol Anger, Bonnie Hayes, and Vickie Randle.

Songs on the album include *What Kind of Self-Respecting Faggot Am I?*, a folksy tune reminiscent of '50s music; *Homophobia*, a mellow melody that features the Dick Kramer Gay Men's Chorale as backup vocals, *Don't Use Your Penis For A Brain*, which hits hard at the patriarchy and Ronnie Reagan:

*We've got a president who's so confused
He can't tell right from wrong
He thinks a missile is a "peace keeper"
And that weapons make us strong
But that kind of rationale
Will only make us dead
I wish that when he runs the country
He would use his other head!*

and other songs that will touch the hearts of

everyone because they speak to all of us, not just some of us.

The startling thing about Romanovsky and Phillips is that they are not only talented, they are out and successful, which is unusual in their industry. Bernard Spunberg, in an article in *Advocate* quotes Paul Phillips, reminiscing about a homophobic incident that happened in Little Rock Arkansas last year.

"In March '85," recalls Phillips, "we played the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The women's production company who booked us and the university all knew very well we were gay. During the intermission, some people who were not supposed to be there snuck into the balcony. We opened our second half with *Flaunting It*. I was wearing quasi-drag. The intruders stormed out and got some campus guards, who told our producers about complaints concerning undesirables in the auditorium.

"A woman standing a little ways off had been listening to the confrontation. Finally, she spoke up. 'Listen,' she said to the guards. 'You should be more careful. Don't go barging into situations before you know exactly what's going on. Sooner or later, you're going to realize we're all around you.' And with that, she pulled out her state trooper's badge.

"The guards left."

Romanovsky and Phillips is a livewire cabaret duo that no self-respecting lesbian, gay man or enlightened heterosexual can afford to miss. Their concerts are a treat for all audiences, so don't you miss them while they are in Portland, Tuesday, April 29 at 8 pm at the Northwest Service Center.

Tickets are \$10 and net proceeds benefit Phoenix Rising Foundation, Portland's only lesbian and gay service center. Tickets are available in advance at A Woman's Place Bookstore, Artichoke Music, Music Millenium, Catbird Seat Bookstore, Twenty-Third Avenue Books, Just Out and Phoenix Rising offices.

Performance for Life concert huge success

by Bill Youngren

The Performance for Life benefit concert at the Arlene Schnitzer Hall on February 28 was a huge success, according to sources close to the event. It has netted well in excess of \$8,000 for AIDS service agencies as well as unifying the local community, both gay and straight, in the fight against AIDS.

"I wanted not only to raise money but to raise the consciousness of the public about AIDS," Fred Korman, originator of the event, says.

After receiving the support of James DePreist, conductor of the Oregon Symphony, and the symphony association, a committee was formed consisting of Fred Korman, Steve Fulmer, Robert Nielson, Paul Douroumis, Ellie O'Hagen and Mary Ann Cogan.

Christine Chatwood, co-chair of the party committee says, "I've never attended an event in Portland where you can look out on the dance floor and see people like the Schnitzers dancing next to couples of men and couples of women."

According to Bill Dickey, party committee member, getting restaurants to help sometimes took a little persistence but that many called asking to help out. The restaurant management firm of Goforth and Rice took over operations at the concert with many of its best employees, both gay and straight, volunteering to prepare and serve the large amount of food contributed to the event.

The community would like to thank the businesses and performing groups that contributed their funds, time, energy, food and other resources to make this event possible.

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