

Temple Madness with Eartha Kitt

by Jay Brown

The inimitable Eartha Kitt, star of stage, screen and television, critically acclaimed biographer, and soon to open on Broadway in a one-woman show, will appear for one performance only at City Nights' Temple Madness Dance Concert on Saturday, August 30, at the Masonic Temple, SW Park Avenue at Main.

Temple Madness with Eartha Kitt is the third AIDS benefit dance concert to be sponsored by City Nights. The two previous concerts have netted more than \$10,000 for the gay people of Oregon facing AIDS. (Cascade AIDS Project, [formerly the CHESS/PAL Project and Cascade AIDS Project] received a total of \$8,000, The Brinker Fund benefitted by \$1,300 and Thelma MacDonald, a counselor working with AIDS/ARC persons and their families, loved ones and friends, received \$1,000.)

"City Nights is not an organization," says Greg Asher. "We're a bunch of ten guys who like to throw parties. Dance/concert support staff are volunteers who come from organizations like Cascade AIDS Project, Portland Gay Mens Chorus, The Imperial Rose Court and other such groups."

Asher, who acts as treasurer for the informal group, stressed that although City Nights is raising money for AIDS organizations "we don't lose sight of the fact that we are also having fun while we're doing it."

Eartha Kitt should be an extremely astute choice for adding to the fun. Ms. Kitt became a smash hit in the early '50s by poking fun and smashing sacred cows with her exotic delivery and sexy songs. "Santa Baby" and "I Wanna Be Evil" introduced in Leonard Sillman's *New Faces of 1952*, insured Eartha Kitt's status as a legend in her own time.

In the intervening years, Ms. Kitt's credits include Mehitabel the Cat in *Shinbone Alley*, the title role in *Anna Lucasta*, a film adapta-



Eartha Kitt

tion in a Black milieu of O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, Salome, and the Cat Woman on television's *Batman*.

During the Viet Nam War, Ms. Kitt became *persona non grata* at the Johnson White House for speaking out against U.S. involvement in that conflict while she was a guest at a luncheon hosted by Lady Bird Johnson. For several years after the White House incident Eartha was forced to work abroad because of a domestic blacklist against her.

In 1978, President Carter invited her to the White House and things went much more smoothly.

A new album by Eartha Kitt titled "I Love Men" with its hit single "Where Is My Man" has earned gold records in Sweden, France and Germany. And she just completed an episode on the popular *Miami Vice*.

Temple Madness with Eartha Kitt tickets at \$15 each are available at the "usual places" or by mail: City Nights, PO Box 10663, Portland, OR 97210. Tickets at the door are \$17.

Member of the Wedding

by Sandra De Helen

The Member of the Wedding, by Carson McCullers, will run at PSU through August 17. Director Susan LeClerc has assembled an unbeatable cast for this classic play by a Southern woman writer.

The story is set in the South in August, 1946 (the year it was written as a novel). Frankie Addams (Kelly Brooks) is a 12-year old girl with a "crush on the weddin'" of her brother, Jarvis (Andrew Cox) and his bride, Janice (Laurel Ann Neuber).

Most of the dialogue occurs among Frankie, Berenice (Julianne R. Johnson) the cook, and Frankie's 7-year-old cousin, John Henry (Aaron Cooley). These are the important relationships. Berenice provides nurturance, love, support and values for Frankie, whose mother died at Frankie's birth. She is also a friend to both children, playing cards, telling stories (sometimes she almost forgets they are children) and singing with them.

Frankie pushes/pulls both Berenice and John Henry with the waxing and waning of her roller coaster adolescent emotions. John Henry is literally chased out and coaxed back at Frankie's whim.

Jarvis returns from Army Camp to be married, and Frankie falls quite hopelessly in love with the romance of it all. As the time for the wedding grows closer, Frankie's fantasies grow wilder and she believes they will take her along on the honeymoon and home to live with them. Frankie fancies that they will be forever "the we of me." Her loneliness is portrayed with rare sensitivity.

Kelly Brooks dons the hyperactive, giddily emotional personality of a 12-year-old girl as other women might put on a favorite sweater. She spins and twists about the stage and flings herself into a lump on Julianne R. Johnson's lap. And Julianne holds her so naturally, one can easily believe they have indeed seen each other every day for 12 years.

Aaron Cooley is almost equally believable as John Henry.

All the acting is of high caliber. Of particular note is Donald William as Honey Camden Brown. And, McCullers' script deserves the best.

In 1946, in the South, Carson McCullers managed to treat the subjects of racism, the atom bomb, sex role stereotypes, beauty standards, love, romance and profound loneliness with equal aplomb and with no heavy-handedness.

Excellent scenery, lighting and costumes by Jeff Seats, Peter West and Jeanne Arnold, respectively. Sound design was not credited, but is noteworthy.

PSU's Summer Festival Theatre is presenting some of the best plays in Portland. Opening August 27 and running through Sept. 21 is Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*.

Foxy Ladies BINGO party

The Foxy Ladies of Oregon are presenting a BINGO extravaganza, August 15, at the Northwest Service Center, 1819 NW Everett.

The evening is planned as a memorial to Joie Verdina, second runner-up in this year's Foxy Lady pageant. Until her death in June, it had been Joie's wish to operate an AIDS hospice house.

Proceeds will benefit both The Dennis House, the hospice house for AIDS patients, and the Portland Chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

Foxy Lady Anette promises a fun evening, with guest callers, including Darcelle XV, Cathy Siemens, Mr. Bill, and others. Wonderful prizes have been donated for this benefit.

All ages are invited. Doors open at 6:30; games will be from 7 to 11 pm. Both hard cards (50¢ each, \$3 minimum) and throwaway blackout games (\$1 each) will be called throughout the evening. Snack food, beverages, and child care will be available.



Peter Marshall pictured here with the Notorious Cagelles portrays George in *La Cage Aux Folles* at the Civic Auditorium, August 13-17.

La Cage aux Folles makes Portland stop

La Cage aux Folles, winner of the 1984 Tony for best musical, will pause in Portland

for seven performances at Civic Auditorium August 13-17.

Peter Marshall of "Hollywood Squares" and Keene Curtis, best known for his portrayal of Daddy Warbucks in *Annie* head an extraordinary cast of singing, dancing, and fantastically attired "cagelles."

La Cage aux Folles has been unanimously referred to as "the most lavishly-costumed, spangled, sequined and feathered" musical Broadway has ever known. The creative brilliance of the show's costume designer Theoni V. Aldredge earned her every 1984 theatrical costume design award including the Tony Award.

Untold quantities of brightly-colored bugle beads, baubles, rhinestones, glitter, sequins and feathers adorn most of the show's 200 costumes. The most exotic and spectacular of these costumes are worn by Zaza and Les Cagelles, the star and dancing chorus of the lavish St. Tropez nightclub where *La Cage aux Folles* takes place.

While designing eye-popping gowns for an actress is one thing, doing it for an actor is quite another, for Zaza and eight of the ten Les Cagelles who sing and dance in high heels and dresses in the transvestite nightclub are men.

But, beside the facts that men have bigger shoulders and feet than women, Miss Aldredge doesn't feel that designing a dress for a man is much different than designing one for a woman.

Miss Aldredge has designed more than 150 Broadway shows including *42nd Street*, *A Chorus Line*, *Dreamgirls* and *The Rink*. Among her countless awards are previous Tony Awards for *Annie* and *Barnum*, and an Academy Award for *The Great Gatsby*.

Music and lyrics are by the legendary Jerry Herman who is also known for *Hello Dolly!*

and *Mame*. Arthur Laurents, best known author of the books *West Side Story* and *Gypsy* directs the musical and the book is by two-time Tony Award winning Harvey Fierstein.

La Cage aux Folles will perform Wednesday through Sunday, August 13-17. Tickets are on sale at all GI Joe's stores, Galleria Jean Machine and the Auditorium Box Office. Ticket prices range from \$25 to \$32; Charge by phone — 293-7700. Group sales, 20 or more receive a 10% discount; call 246-3572.

Gay play contest deadline due

The 1986 Jane Chambers Memorial International Gay Playwriting Contest will remain open for submissions through October 1, 1986. The contest is sponsored by the Meridian Gay Theatre Playwrights and Directors Group to encourage the writing of new gay and lesbian plays.

Winning plays will be announced before February 1, 1987 and will receive a staged reading at the Meridian Gay Theatre's Playwrights and Directors Series in New York City later in the spring.

Entries to the contest should be directed to Meridian Theatre Playwrights and Directors Group, PO Box 294, Village Station, New York, NY 10014. For a copy of the contest rules send SASE to the same address.