

just entertainment

Portland Revued

"Of all the places, it's been the best," exclaims a cast member of the Ten Percent Revue, which just finished a very successful run in Puddletown. Here are more thoughts and plans of the cast.

B Y W C M c R A E

During its eight performances here, the Ten Percent Revue played to over 1,300 people. The Portland audiences weren't alone in enjoying the Boston-based group's stay. The Ten Percent Revue ranks the Portland shows as their most satisfying and enjoyable to date.

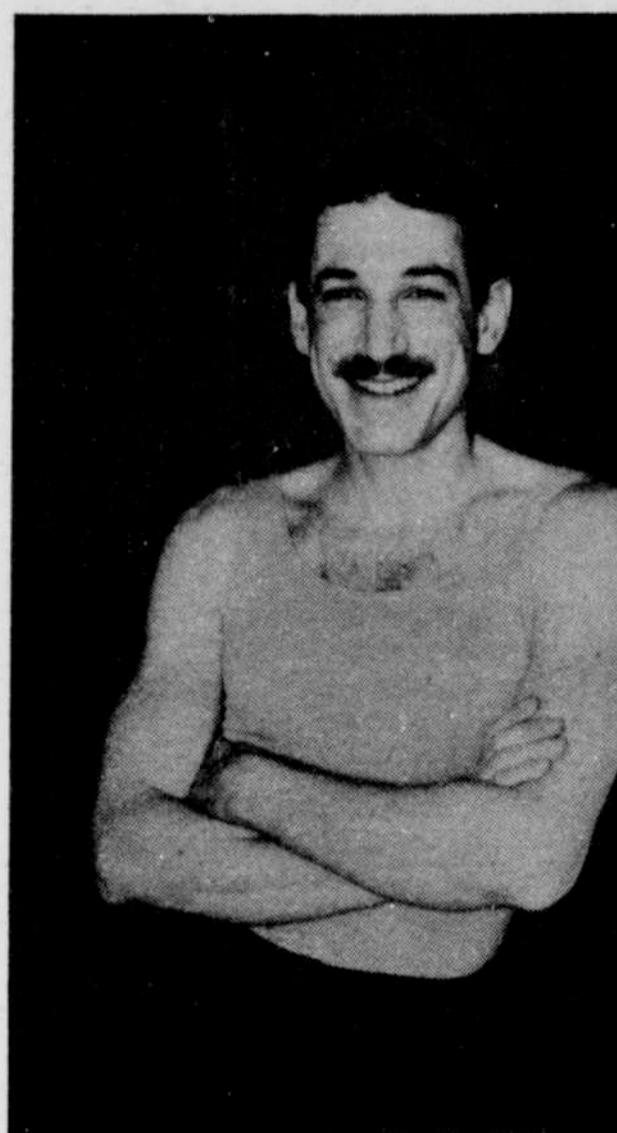
Tom Wilson Weinberg, composer and piano accompanist for the Revue, performed in Portland once before, at Reed College as a solo artist. Although Weinberg will stay with the Ten Percent Revue for its next engagements, he plans to work both on doing more solo performances and on a more traditional piece of musical theatre with a gay theme. Weinberg first brought Ten Percent Revue to the stage in March of 1985, but "the show has been constantly changing ever since," he says. Not just the cast, but the songs themselves — witness the song "And the Supremes" written in reaction to the Supreme Court's anti-sodomy ruling. "I like to see the show grow," Weinberg

says. The show has played New York, Boston, Provincetown, San Francisco, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. Weinberg said that, "There's something special about Portland. I felt really at home. I'd like to stay longer."

The Ten Percent Revue next appears in Syracuse, New York (Weinberg's home town), and Amherst, Massachusetts.

Like Weinberg, singer and actress Helena Snow is also an aspiring playwright. After performing in Ten Percent Revue for eight months, Snow claims she's "not tired of the show at all. It's different from other shows because it means so much. I feel when I go on stage that I have an enormous present to give the audience."

Snow commented that the cast was "thrilled" about the Portland audiences. "They got the jokes," she said, adding that some audiences in other cities didn't catch the innuendos or references. "For example, the line 'I'd keep my labrys in a sheathe,' got a laugh. In Atlanta, it went right over their heads. It's unanimous. We all adored being here."



Jon Arterton, Helena Snow, Elliot Pilshaw, and Jenifer Firestone

Tom Wilson Weinberg

Portland was so friendly and open, Snow said, that cast members were relieved to find a rude motorist on the freeway one day. "Somebody here has got to be rude," she laughed.

Elliot Pilshaw will have a chance to experience rude motorists as he drives his car cross-country from San Francisco to the East Coast. The Portland shows were the last for Pilshaw, who is the only performer who has stayed with the Ten Percent Revue since its first performance in 1985. He leaves the show to pursue his own career as a solo singer.

John Arterton also leaves the show after the Portland performances. He's trading it in on "New York, Broadway auditions, and unemployment." Arterton was adamant about the virtues of Portland. "I love it here. The audiences were exciting to play to, and were aware politically." Arterton, on more than one occasion, made inquiries about relocating to Portland, tempted by the low cost of living, the opportunities for gay-oriented theatre and cabaret, and the friendliness of the people. And perhaps, by Flossie's.

"Of all the places we've performed,"

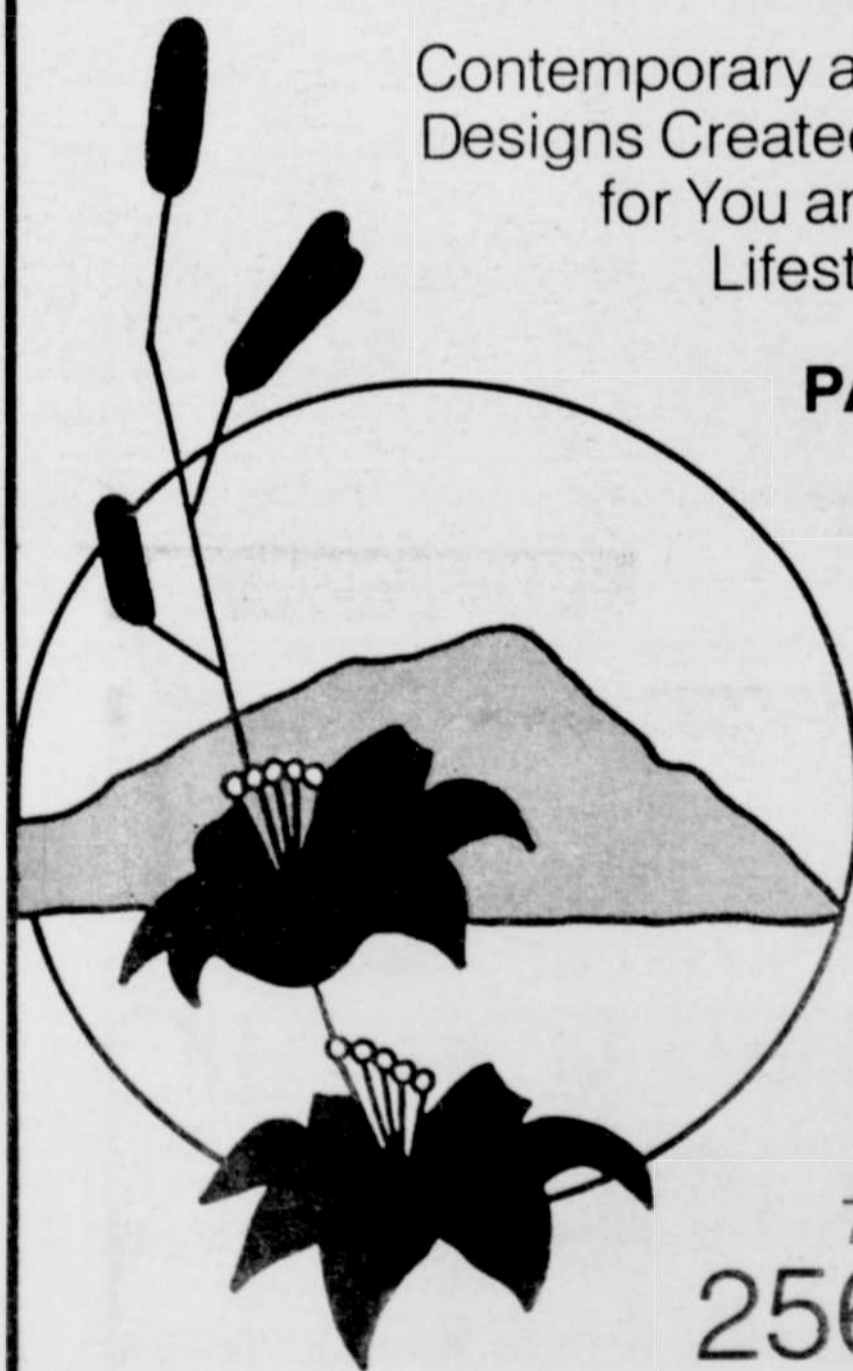
said Jenifer Firestone, "Portland's been the best — on many fronts. The people here are really incredible and the audiences have been really rewarding." Firestone, who has worked as a social worker in Boston, plans to stick with the show and continue her project of writing a manual for women who want to go into non-traditional jobs.

The greatest insight of performing in the Ten Percent Revue for Firestone has been that, "We all have to stick together. Working and traveling in a group has made me realize how important it is that gay men and lesbians work together. It's not easy, either with this show, or in politics and society. But we've got to support each other. That's the lesson of the Ten Percent Revue."

Beyond making 1,300 gay people feel good about themselves in Portland, the Ten Percent Revue brought 1,300 women and men together to interact. Night after night, men and women mingled together in a non-political venue, feeling positive and unified. Jenifer may be right: The Ten Percent Revue may have been just what it took to bring us together.

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