

just entertainment

Revolting women share limelight

There's a revolution going on at the New Rose Theatre, and you shouldn't miss it!

BY SANDRA DE HELEN

This *One Thing I Do*, written by Claire Braz-Valentine in collaboration with director Michael Griggs brings to life two of the greatest political activists in U.S. history: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.

Most of us have at least heard of Susan B. — wasn't she the one who took an axe to taverns way back when? And, maybe she was a suffragist or something, and oh, yeah, she was on some coin that didn't work out.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were fast friends and collaborators for more than fifty years. They were both outraged at the injustice of women's suppression from the moment they recognized it as very young girls. They met when Susan heard Elizabeth speak for women's equality at an Anti-slavery Anniversary in Syracuse, New York. At that point Susan left the temperance movement (where she had made her mark) for the women's movement. Their history together was a long and wonderful one, with one central, burning theme: Equality for women (of which the vote was one small part).

Elizabeth was married to abolitionist Henry Stanton. They had seven children. Susan never married, so was free to travel the country delivering the "thunderbolts"

forged by Elizabeth. At times, Elizabeth also travelled and spoke, bringing her children along.

This One Thing I Do breathes life into the sluggish women's movement today. Here are Elizabeth and Susan B. larger than life, speaking again the words that fired our great-grandmothers into action. To see them, feel their energy (I know they are "only" actors, but I felt the presence of Susan and Elizabeth), to see their tears of passion and sorrow, is to feel what they felt and to wonder at the absolute fact that women *still* do not have equal rights under the Constitution.

Kathleen Worley is Susan; Diane Olson is Elizabeth. Both women are perfectly cast, and as mentioned, absolutely represent their characters.

The entire cast does a fine job. Joel Applegate stepped in five days before preview to substitute for ailing Sam A. Mowry. He plays Henry Stanton and gives a long impassioned closing argument to Susan's jury, as Councillor Selden. Plaudits for Joel.

Michael Griggs is to be commended for adopting a policy (we *hope* it's a policy) of casting based on skill rather than color. As ethnic minorities have been saying all along, the audiences will accept Black (Chicano/Asian/Arabian) actors in "white" roles — if you'll only put them onstage.



Diane Olson as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Kevin Leinbach as Arthur Brenton and Kathleen Worley as Susan B. Anthony in *This One Thing I Do* at New Rose Theater.

Susan L. Bonde's costumes work wonderfully — they're designed for quick change and transition from one scene to another. The fabrics are lush and the designs correct for the periods covered.

The set design by Jeff Seats is also de-

signed for scene flow and simultaneous scenes — and is just right! Ditto for the lighting by Jeff Forbes.

The last time Susan B. Anthony came to Portland was in 1905. You probably missed it. Please don't miss her this time. •

Lesbian play to premier in Portland

"It's a not necessarily-politically-correct-lesbian-feminist-mystery-farce," says the playwright.

BY EJ WESTLAKE

Historically, musical comedies with large casts offered simple story lines with at least one or two romantic sub-plots. As society became a little more sophisticated, the sub-plots of boy-meets-girl evolved into boy-meets-boy or girl-meets-girl, but often it was a very under-played sub-sub-plot. Or worse, innuendoes were carefully placed within the text so that only those who "spoke the language" spotted the possible gay or lesbian character. A new play will change all that. It's called a "not-necessarily-politically-correct-lesbian-feminist-mystery-farce." Sounds pretty incredible to me, but a mystery with a lesbian cast will be presented at Portland State at the end of this month.

When I finally got the playwright on the phone (and, by the way, she's nearly impossible to get ahold of) I was able to ask her a few questions about her play, *The Foofy, Open-Toed Shoe*.

Just Out: What exactly is a "not-necessarily-politically-correct-lesbian-feminist-mystery-farce"?

Playwright: It's twenty women frantically running around Portland looking for a performance space. That's a farce, all right.

J.O.: Don't you feel the absence of male characters is discriminatory to male actors?

P.: No.

J.O.: Is the cast really made up entirely of women?

P.: There's a dog in it, too.



J.O.: But don't you miss working with men?

P.: Who sent this woman to ask these silly questions?

J.O.: Some people seem to feel that comedy is not an art form to be taken seriously. What are your feelings on that?

P.: Hey, I've been studying this stuff for a long time and comic theory is no laughing matter. It's a very serious art form.

J.O.: Well, we've been having this interview for a few minutes now and I have to know — who are you, anyway?

P.: I'm you, you nit! You're talking to yourself again.

The Foofy, Open-Toed Shoe, by Ej Westlake plays May 28, 29, and 30 at 8:00 p.m. in the studio theatre, Lincoln Hall at Portland State University. The play is under the direction of Karen Thurow and is a WACKO (Womyn's Acting Company and Komediy Organization) production, co-sponsored by the PSU Lesbian Alliance. Admission is on a sliding scale. For more information call 236-5717. •

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